COMMENTARY

FOUNDING THE NEW STATE

An Expert's Estimate of the Tasks Ahead

DAVID HOROWITZ

A WORLD of dreams has come true against the background of twenty centuries of martyrdom and a tenacious struggle for survival—this was the first, the emotional reaction to the United Nations decision on Palestine. More than a state and a haven of refuge were created in that fateful hour. The ethnic identity and continuity of Jewish national existence was reasserted. An epoch of national renascence was inaugurated.

However, appreciation of the event cannot be confined to this emotional reaction. It is a political event, and analysis must first and foremost deal with its political significance.

The recognition of the Jewish people as a distinct ethnic entity and, by virtue of its ethnic distinction, a national entity, is one of the most important political features of the developments at the UN. The Ad Hoc Committee of the UN admitted Jews on an equal footing to the community of nations—even though only for this unique occasion. Jewish representatives appeared as the legitimate, recognized protagonists of a national interest.

There was another important departure. The Jewish case was not backed by any physical power that might be thrown into the scales. This struggle for liberation in the UN forum was as unique as the entire Jewish and Palestine problem. The justice of the cause, the concrete and constructive achievements in Palestine, the fact of a living national reality there, the rights and the dire need of the Jewish people—these, rather than the usual counters of power politics, were the weapons used in this phase of the struggle that closed with the resolution of the UN General Assembly.

That the Jewish cause would prevail in the Unscop report could have been expected. An inquiry commission assumes, by its very function and composition, a semi-judicial character, and, though aware of political implications, it cannot disregard the merits of the case which it is appointed to examine. In the

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FEW people are better qualified than DAVID HOROWITZ to chart for American readers the problems involved in implementing the UN decision for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. Mr. Horowitz has been for many years the chief economic adviser to the Jewish Agency, and has written widely and authoritatively on the economic aspects of Jewish Palestine. He is director of the Economic Department of the Jewish Agency, co-director of the Agency's Economic Research Institute, and author of numerous books, including *Aspects of Economic Policy in Palestine* (1936), *Jewish Colonization in Palestine* (1937), *Economic Survey of Palestine* (with Rita Hinden, 1938), and *Postwar Reconstruction* (1943). He is now in the United States after a brief visit to Palestine, where he makes his home in Tel Aviv. He was born in Drohobycz, Poland, in 1899, was educated in Poland and Vienna.

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General Assembly, on the other hand, political considerations loom supreme, and the Jewish representatives were at a tactical disadvantage. They had accepted the principles of the Unscop report as a compromise solution, since the General Assembly, they knew, would not endorse any solution which did not command the support of at least one of the contending parties. At the same time, this acceptance made the Unscop compromise report appear a definitely Jewish solution, and reinforced the tendency to look for a new compromise between the demand for an Arab state in all of Palestine on the one hand, and partition and Jewish immigration on the other. Further, the strong representation of the Arab states in the Assembly gave them superior bargaining power for their efforts.

American-Russian cooperation, however, turned out to be decisive. The task of the Jewish delegation had appeared beforehand as a fool's errand, since, as British observers often remarked, the required two-thirds majority could be secured only if an identical solution received the endorsement and support of both the United States and the Soviet bloc.

The miracle happened, however. The United States and the Soviet Union cooperated on the Palestine problem in a most cordial and practical manner. A significant and promising experiment has been made, and an encouraging precedent has been established. It augurs well for the spirit which will emanate from the new Jewish state that this miracle of peaceful cooperation between the two most important world powers was achieved in the process of its formation.

However, the political success at Flushing Meadows, notwithstanding its far-reaching implications, cannot alone secure the establishment of the Jewish state. The core of the Palestine problem is the implementation of the solution adopted by the UN. The danger posed by the creation of a political and military vacuum in a strategically and politically important area makes it a matter of the utmost urgency that a practical means of implementation be found.

IN THE center of attention at present are the military and economic aspects of the establishment of the Jewish state and the inauguration of immigration on a large scale. The military problem takes precedence over all others, for the Arabs are trying to achieve by military action what they could not obtain by pleading their case before the UN.

Military action by the Arabs is likely to take three forms: (1) local troubles and an armed uprising of the Arab population of Palestine; (2) infiltration of armed bands from neighboring countries, smuggling of arms into the country, and financial and moral support extended by the Arab states to the Arabs of Palestine; (3) actual armed intervention by the Arab states.

The first of these is almost a certainty, and the present disturbances appear to be a prelude to something more serious, which will be more than a probability once the evacuation of British troops has been completed. Any solution of the Palestine problem had to result in local clashes; no solution at all would have meant even more widespread and prolonged strife and bloodshed. Local disturbances, however, are expected to be dealt with by the militia to be established by the UN commission, which, in the Jewish state, would be the Haganah, a force well able to deal with any localized trouble. In the military sense, there is hardly any numerical disparity between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, taking into account the population of military age and its military preparedness and training. Moreover, a larger proportion of the population can be mobilized for defense than for aggression, which favors the Jewish side. As to training, equipment, keenness, intelligence, and resourcefulness, the Haganah is certainly superior to the Arab quasi-military organizations in Palestine.

The situation will become more serious if, as may well happen, the local Arab forces are strengthened by armed bands, weapons, and money from neighboring Arab countries. The independent Arab states can obtain virtually any quantity and category of arms for which they are willing to pay, while the Jews of Palestine cannot, and a disparity in

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equipment, particularly heavy equipment, would render the task of Jewish defense very difficult.

THE prospect of open intervention by neighboring Arab states appears more remote, but if materialized, it would make the situation fairly serious. The difficulties of intervention would be formidable. Arab states engaging in an open war of aggression would probably have to leave the UN, which would have a most detrimental effect on their vital interests and prestige. In addition, the military value of the Arab armies is limited, and a campaign in Palestine against determined and bitter resistance would tax their strength to the utmost. The Egyptian, Iraqi, and Saudi armies would have to cross vast expanses of desert, with long and flimsy lines of communication and supply. The only valuable military forces, the mechanized and well armed Arab Legion and Transjordan Frontier Force, are, for political reasons, unlikely to embark on such a military venture. Moreover, geographical and military handicaps are aggravated by political difficulties. Iraq may have to cope with a Kurdish revolt in the rear. Lebanon cannot disregard the existence of a large Christian minority which is by no means hostile to the establishment of a Jewish state, and whose leaders went so far as to support such a resolution in their evidence before Unscop. King Abdullah of Transjordan would hardly allow his mortal enemy Ibn Saud to cross his country on a military expedition against Jewish Palestine. The semi-feudal structure of the Arab states accentuates the antagonisms of the chieftains and lords of Arabia. Financial and economic difficulties must also be borne in mind.

Notwithstanding all these obstacles, it would be folly to discard completely the grim possibility of a formidable array of forces being marshalled against the nascent Jewish state.

In the event of local disturbances supported by Arab states and an infiltration of armed bands, successful defense would depend on the manner of British evacuation, the extent of preparedness of the Jewish militia, and help from abroad. If British evacuation is gradual, as requested in the UN resolution, and a port with sufficient hinterland is avacuated first, this would permit the building up of a Jewish military force in an area temporarily isolated from the rest of the country. If, however, evacuation were to be precipitate and simultaneous all over the country, the clash with the Arabs would precede the consolidation of a militia and of Jewish governmental organs.*

The question of British evacuation, far from being a purely technical one, is thus essentially political, and its handling will depend on the British attitude towards the UN decision on Palestine. It will also provide a test case for British cooperation with the UN Commission and the Commission's ability to assert its authority.

As for the militia itself, it will be faced, first and foremost, with the problem of supply and equipment, especially heavy equipment, which would have to be provided by the UN Commission and Jews in other countries. The mobilization for defense of nearly the entire manpower of the young state, badly needed for agricultural and industrial production, will also constitute a serious economic problem, which the state can hardly be expected to handle alone and unaided.

The grave possibility of an attempt by Arab states to invade Jewish Palestine would have to be met by the Security Council of the UN. Only this body is now left competent to deal with such a question. If it were to tolerate such a flagrant flouting of its decisions and leave the solution of the problem to a free-for-all, its ability to command any respect for its authority would be seriously impaired.†

*On January 21, Sir Alexander Cadogan told the UN Palestine Commission that Great Britain would not comply with the UN recommendation for the evacuation of a seaport and its surrounding territory.—ED.

† Since this article was received, Moshe Shertok, head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, has announced that the Agency would request the United Nations to set up an international police force to help enforce its decision on Palestine.—ED.

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ANOTHER aspect of the situation, equal in importance to that of security and interdependent with it, is immigration. The pace of immigration will be dictated by the conditions under which Jews have to live in various countries of the Diaspora, and by the exigencies of the situation in Palestine—i.e., considerations of security.

There is every possible reason to accelerate the rate of immigration above the 150,000 proposed in Unscop's report for the first two years. Terrific pressure from the Diaspora must be expected. Jews still in assembly centers in Europe, in the third year after the end of the war, are not likely to be in a mood to wait any longer. They will certainly claim the right to immigration into the Jewish state before the winter of 1948-49. The threats of Arab governments against their Jewish citizens may create a menacing situation for Jews in the Middle East, leading to precipitate emigration from those countries. In addition, the safety of the Yishuv, exposed to Arab onslaught, may well depend on numerical reinforcements by immigration.

The concurrent tasks of defense against formidable forces and absorption of large-scale immigration impose on the Yishuv a heavy, indeed an almost intolerable burden. Imagine that the Jewish community of the United States had to absorb in one year no fewer than 800,000 immigrant Jews, nearly all of them destitute; this represents approximately the same proportion as 100,000 additions to the Jewish population of Palestine. And even this gives no accurate picture of the difficulties which the Jewish state must encounter, since the economy of the United States, its resources and capacity of economic absorption, are incomparably greater than those of Palestine.

While coping with this enormous burden, the Jewish state will also have to subsidize the Arab state—as decided by the UN—with an amount equal to some five per cent of its national income. And of course it will have to devote a considerable proportion of its funds to the Arab minority within its own borders, with a view to raising its standard of life: obviously, it would be morally and practically impossible to maintain the Jewish standard of life without extending to the Arabs the same educational, health, and other services as are enjoyed by the Jews.

It is true that an influx of immigrants of similar proportions was once—in 1935—absorbed by Palestine in a single year. But a considerable proportion of those immigrants brought their equipment and capital with them, and it was a period of surpluses, not of shortages as is the case now. The present economic condition of the Jewish community in Palestine leaves a very small margin for further sacrifices. Already, nearly one-third of the national income of the community is absorbed either by taxes or voluntary contributions. This burden can hardly be increased to any appreciable extent, in view of the fact that, in terms of services and commodities, the national income per head of the Jewish population of Palestine is only about one-third of the income per head in America.

If the immigrants are really to be absorbed into the country's economy, they must be provided with housing, industrial and agricultural machinery, irrigated land, all kinds of tools and implements. Large funds will be required for rehabilitation and vocational training, and the large proportion of children to be admitted and supported until they reach working age will increase the difficulty and the cost of absorbing the coming wave of immigration.

The estimate of 400 million dollars for the first 150,000 immigrants, exclusive of defense and security, is certainly not too high.

Of course, part of this expenditure for the absorption of immigrants will be borne by private capital. A large influx of immigrants will stimulate the building industry and agricultural and industrial production, and thus will increase purchasing power. In the long run, however, the absorption and full employment of new immigrants involves the complete transformation of the country and the widest possible utilization of its resources. Poverty of resources must be compensated for by improved, more intensive exploitation, lack of space by larger investment of capital, greater technical proficiency,

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and higher productivity. Space is interchangeable with capital and skill, and Palestine's deficiency of the former can be compensated for by a surplus of the latter.

These short-term plans for new immigration, however, must be dovetailed into a long-range plan with a logical and rational pattern.

AT PRESENT the distribution of the Jewish population in Palestine is unsatisfactory from an economic as well as from a security point of view. The bulk of the population is concentrated in the coastal plain, leaving the extremities in the north and south—Huleh and the Negev—with very few Jews. This cannot continue in the long run; and in any case, such unexploited resources as Palestine possesses (both agricultural and mineral) are to be found at the extremities. It will be imperative to increase food production because of the world situation and Palestine's adverse trade balance. This implies the improvement of new areas and the execution of large-scale irrigation plans, which are costly and technically difficult.

Large numbers of immigrants can be absorbed only if the pace of industrialization is accelerated. Industry will have to be based on skill and knowledge and on the natural resources of the country, such as the mineral resources of the Dead Sea, and the industrially useful by-products of the oil refineries and the citrus plantations. Imports of machinery will be essential. Industries based on skill and knowledge, the so-called processing industries, using light raw materials for which the cost of transport is unimportant, have done fairly well in Palestine, thanks to the influx of experts from the European continent, and should be furthered. Diamond cutting and polishing, the fashion industry, the production of all manner of gadgets and machinery, are cases in point.

The pace of agricultural and industrial development will depend, first and foremost, on the import of capital and availability of skill. Since the First World War, Jewish investments in Palestine have attained the sum of 600 million dollars and have made it economically possible to establish an additional population of over half a million Jews. The cost of absorption of immigration in the future, however, will depend to some extent on the prevailing level of world prices and will undoubtedly be larger.

THE main long-range problem which the partition scheme as the solution of the Palestine problem creates is that of the economic absorptive capacity of a small country. Economic absorptive capacity, it is true, depends more on social and economic and political conditions than on area, yet this contention is valid only within certain limits. How can the country's limitations be overcome?

The existence of a Jewish state permits a progressive economic policy that may help to compensate for the contraction in area in a way that the Mandate government's policy could not. Economic fluctuations in Palestine are to a great extent dependent on changes in immigration and capital influx. An independent economic policy may prove an attraction to capital, while autonomy in the regulation of immigration will assure a correspondingly greater influx of immigrants. A progressive customs policy can aid industrialization, and the influx of immigrants will expand the market for new industrial production. An independent fiscal policy now opens the possibility of using taxation and spending to prevent steep fluctuations, through the accumulation of surpluses in times of prosperity and the organization of relief and public works in periods of economic recession.

No mechanical calculation of what appears to be the maximum population possible in a given area can provide any reliable estimate of absorptive capacity. Absorptive capacity depends on historical development as much as on natural conditions. Primitive or progressive social systems, civil and national wars are all part of the process determining which shall be the densely inhabited and which the sparsely inhabited areas of the world. Granted a cultivable soil and a habitable climate, social forces in increasing meas-

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ure, and the forces of nature decreasingly, determine a country's absorptive capacity.

An interesting example in this connection is Sicily. Sicily's area is almost identical with that of Palestine—9,936 square miles as compared with 10,400 square miles in Palestine. On this small area, Sicily supported in 1925 a population of 4,061,000. This community does not consist of densely populated urban agglomerations. It "lives almost exclusively by agriculture" (in the words of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*). Up to 70 per cent of its exports are agricultural. The only industries are table salt, sulphur, citric acid, wine, and some vegetable preserves. The population is on the whole poor, and the lack of capital impedes any progressive development. It is striking that, in spite of the lack of capital and initiative, and the non-existence of modern industry, so large a population can be supported.

Some instances will illustrate the dependance of absorptive capacity on social and economic conditions. In the 10,000 square miles of Palestine, some two million people find it possible to subsist today, while almost the same area supports a population of six million in Lombardy and of eight million in Belgium. On the other hand, Transjordan has a population of only 350,000 in an area three and a half times that of Palestine, while Iraq, an area as large as Palestine, supports at present a population of only 200,000.

The flow of migration also illustrates this point. Arab immigration flows from sparsely populated Syria and Transjordan, into relatively densely populated Palestine, but there is no reverse movement from Palestine into these countries. The government census of 1931 established the fact of internal migration within Palestine from the less densely populated Arab areas into the coastal plain, which is more densely populated and is also the area of Jewish development. Thus the foot-rule is not the primary measuring rod of absorptivity.

The plans worked out by the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem and its subsidiary scientific and research institutions provide for the absorption of one million Jews within ten years. Of course, this master plan is only a working projection of the task and not a hard and fast blueprint which must be adhered to under any conditions.

ANOTHER problem with which the Jewish state will be faced in its initial period is the internal political situation. The tasks of finance, immigration, and long-term economic absorption will, to a certain extent, depend on single-mindedness and unity of purpose within the Yishuv. The internal conflicts and profound differences of opinion on the methods to be employed in the struggle for Jewish liberation are well known. The existence of dissident groups greatly affected the Yishuv's capacity to present a united front and to forge a co-ordinated policy of its own in all spheres of life.

There is good reason to assume that this difficulty will be alleviated in the near future. Terrorism breeds on despair and frustration. The dissident groups and many of their supporters are united solely by this feeling of desperation, and by their revolt against the fact that the remnants of the European holocaust are prevented from reaching a haven of refuge in Palestine. There is hardly any indication of a common political outlook among the rank and file of the groups and their sympathizers. Terror and violence are, in their very nature, repugnant to the Jewish spirit, and particularly to the spirit of the Yishuv. During the riots of 1936-39, the Yishuv manifested an almost superhuman capacity for self-restraint. It needed a tremendous disillusionment and hopelessness to force a comparatively small section of youth into terrorist activity as a means of national policy.

Now the Yishuv will be faced with the task of absorbing hundreds of thousands of immigrants, and building a new state and a new economy—a task which will tax its strength, resources, and abilities to the utmost. Under such circumstances, any inclination to embark on dissident adventures will hardly be backed by a substantial portion of the Yishuv. A violent conflict with

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the dissident groups must therefore be considered as unlikely, even if there is little prospect of, and probably no need for, any formal unity.

As for relations between the various parties, groups, and schools of thought within the Jewish state, one may look forward to a substantial degree of unity in regard to the multitude of external tasks to be tackled. This does not imply political uniformity, and no doubt there will continue to exist within the Yishuv, as within any other normal non-totalitarian body, a fair amount of political differentiation.

PROVIDED a similar degree of unity on the most essential issues is achieved simultaneously among Jewry abroad, the internal political background should be fairly satisfactory. World Jewry will have to provide the equipment and capital for the immigrants coming to Palestine, while the Yishuv must provide the means for building up the Jewish state. Such unity had already been achieved at the UN, with Zionist and non-Zionist bodies cooperating, and it is to be hoped that this unity will be preserved during the much more difficult and prolonged stage of actual state building.

Recognition of Jewish national existence by the UN should have an additional unifying effect. American Jewry—today the largest, richest, and most powerful Jewish community in the world—must play a predominant part in this process of establishing the Jewish state and salvaging the remnants of European Jewry, and a large proportion of Middle Eastern Jewry, through their settlement in Palestine. We must also look to American Jewry to provide the political support of which the nascent Jewish state has great need. This will be the easier since such support, far from involving American Jewry in a conflict with its government, will mean support of the declared policy of the United States government. No less important are the economic tasks which will naturally devolve upon American Jews, who represent practically the only appreciable source of the capital and equipment needed for the immigration and settlement of Jewish masses in Palestine. Another important factor: the immigrants cannot be refugees only. The state will require a sprinkling of technical intelligentsia and a leaven of Jewish elements from free countries, of which the United States is the most important.

The UN decision will provide a supreme test for Jewry, such as it has not had to face for twenty centuries. The manner in which the Yishuv and the Jews throughout the world meet this test will decide whether Palestine is to become a haven of salvation or a death trap. Here is a challenge to all the creative forces of Palestine and of Jewry as a whole. The year just ahead will show whether these forces are equal to the great historical task placed upon the Jewish people by its own destiny and by the world's verdict.

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OUR UNKNOWN AMERICAN JEWISH ANCESTORS

Fact and Myth in History

OSCAR HANDLIN

PROBABLY Columbus was not a Jew, but, then again, there is a possibility that he might have been. Perhaps it was a Jew that first set foot on the shores of the New World! In any case, there certainly were Jews in his crew; and Jews (converted) financed the Queen who financed the journey.

To the American colonies came large numbers of Spanish and Portuguese Israelites. These were great merchants. Most of them lived in Newport where they built a cemetery and synagogue about which Longfellow later wrote a poem. They became patriots in the Revolution, sustaining the cause in its darkest days with their credit. The father of our country, George Washington, wrote a letter on tolerance to the Jews. Haym Salomon.

A second period of settlement developed in the middle of the 19th century. The German Jews who came to the United States in that period were liberals; they were wealthy or became wealthy; they brought Reform Judaism with them; they were patriotic. Judah P. Benjamin.

Toward the end of the century came the flow of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. These people were poor, orthodox, and they worked in the garment industry. But they also became prominent in the fields of entertainment and the arts. They were patriotic. Bombardier Meyer Levin. . . .

I MAINTAIN that this sample is, except perhaps for its brevity, by no means unrepresentative of the versions of American Jewish history now current. There is no dearth of books dealing with the subject, books that range in political and social perspective from the extreme Right to the extreme Left. Yet all, whether they come from the pens of conservative rabbis, or from the presses of International Publishers, have the same deadly monotony. All give the same emphasis to the same incidents; all make the same basic assumptions.

Unhappily, the emphasis happens to be often wrong, and the assumptions often false. Accordingly, the notions of the past that are derived from them are by and large distorted and misleading.

All the accounts start with the identical tripartite division, a Spanish period, a German period, an Eastern-European period, each with its own characteristics that arise from the presumed qualities of the Jews' presumed country of origin. The nature of the social adjustment, of the economic role, of the intellectual cast, and of the religious structure at each stage of settlement are as-

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THE damaging influence of mythical historical distinctions between early American settlers and later arriving ethnic groups on our immigration policy is well understood by now. That immigrant groups—and among them Jews—nurture similar opinions about supposed national differentiations between "old stock" and "newcomers" is not so well known—but possibly equally harmful, at least to their inner morale, and to mutual democratic relations within the group. This is but one example of many, in this discussion by OSCAR HANDLIN, of some of the totally erroneous notions of the Jewish past in America which mark our history books—and of the sad implications of current misconceptions and ignorance. Dr. Handlin, assistant professor of social sciences and member of the department of history and social relations at Harvard, is the author of *Commonwealth* (1946), *The Immigrant in American Politics* (1944), *Boston's Immigrants* (1941), and many articles. He wrote "Democracy Needs the Open Door" in the January, 1947 COMMENTARY. He was born in 1915, was graduated from Brooklyn College, and received his doctorate from Harvard.

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sumed to be outgrowths of the national traits brought in successive periods by Jews from different lands.

THE delusion, for instance, that there was a time when the great majority of American Jews were Spanish is a deeply ingrained article of faith for most historians. Yet that notion has descended to our days on the simple, heedless basis of generalization from a few individual names. Of course, there are enough equally prominent, non-Iberic names, Haym Salomon for instance, to give pause to the easy generalizers. As a matter of fact, the only serious recent study of an American colonial Jewish community has shown, from the synagogue membership lists, that already in the 18th century a majority of the Jews of New York were either German or Polish.

Nor is the idea of a second, German era, more valid. To begin with, it disregards large and important groups of French and English Hebrews. Even more important is the fact that the implied contrast with the period that follows is dubious. A Jewish traveler who came to New York in 1862 found almost one-half the synagogues there composed of Jews who had originated in Eastern Europe. In Boston there is a reference to a Polish Jewish congregation as far back as the 1840's; and elsewhere, there is enough parallel evidence to suggest that the 19th century was not as Teutonic in its complexion as has hitherto been assumed.

Furthermore, quite a few individuals and families casually labeled as German by most authors, prove on re-examination to have birthplaces or to have originated in districts that would not now be so considered. If one were to take away the Czechs and the Hungarians, for example, the ranks of the Germans would be very much attenuated; Isaac Mayer Wise, and the Brandeis and Pulitzer families would thus be lost, to mention only three well-known names.

The question of what was a German Jew becomes even more complicated when the problems of nationality, or of nativity, are examined in the light of the political structure of mid-19th-century Europe. In 1850, one must remember, a Jew born in Galicia would give as his place of birth, Austria; one born in Posnan would say his place of birth was Prussia. Among so many, and such diverse Austrians and Prussians, how can one distinguish which are really Polish and which German?

As a matter of fact, if our Galician or Posner Jew had landed in Castle Garden in 1850, it is more than likely that each would have been inscribed in the immigration records as German, just as would have been the case with any Bavarian and any Badener, with most Swiss, and with many Alsatians. That practice reflected the fact that the primary basis of group distinction in the United States before 1880 was either religion or language, and that, of the two, language played by far the more important role in the process of group identification and differentiation. If Americans at that time distinguished among Jews at all, they did so on the basis of language. A cursory survey of scattered evidence leads me to the tentative conclusion that any Yiddish-speaking Jew in this country before 1880 would have been classified as German.

If the second period thus loses its exclusively Germanic quality, the presumptive differences between it and the last fifty years disintegrate. As the economic dislocations that were the seeds of emigration spread eastward, both Jewish and non-Jewish movements out of the domains of the Hapsburgs and the Romanovs mounted rapidly in volume. But the Germans also continued to come, and in numbers no smaller than before, particularly if we compensate in our reckonings for the loss after 1918 of territory by the Central Powers to the successor states. A fresh evaluation of the material would, I am sure, prove that through the past century and a half the sources of immigration were always varied—no less for Jews than for non-Jews. Gradual shifts in emphasis corresponded to the gradual changes in the tides of European migration to the United States, but never disrupted the essential continuity of the flow.

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If these familiar "three periods" lack basis in the actual facts of nativity and nationality, they are none the less revealing, for they mirror the opinions of Jews already in America about themselves and about their more recently arrived coreligionists. There is a meaningful reason for these divisions, the nature of which becomes clearer by comparison with similar divisions marked out in other American ethnic groups.

Even immigrants who stem from countries with clearly delimited political boundaries make such distinctions. Within many ethnic groups earlier arrivals persistently endeavored to establish a basis for differentiation between themselves and later comers of the same stock. Thus, for instance, the Scotch-Irish attempted to keep themselves apart from the South Irish, the High Germans from the Low Germans (or alternatively, the "grays" from the "greens"), the North from the South Italians, and the Slovaks from the Carpatho-Ruthenians.

Involved in this fragmentation is the desire of people further advanced in adaptation to free themselves of responsibility for the social backwardness of the less advanced "greenhorns." Those who, by length of residence or ease of adjustment, have approached the "native" standards of behavior seek in this manner to purge themselves of the stigmata of foreignness. At the same time, they tend thus to maintain, in fraternal and religious institutions that continue to be used in common, a certain distance between themselves and their social inferiors. I think a case could be made for the argument that those who called themselves Spanish Jews in the 1840's were those who wished to keep apart from the peddlers and petty shopkeepers of these years, just as later the "Germans" were those who wished to separate themselves from the needleworkers of the 1890's.

Approval by those elements in the native population that, for one reason or another, were hostile to foreigners and immigrants, always put a premium upon such differentiations. To the xenophobe, such distinctions seemed a reasonable basis for accepting the American past of an ethnic group while rejecting its living members. The Know-Nothing of 1854 could argue away John Paul Jones and the Hibernians of the 18th century with the explanation that those were Scotch-Irish; and from the premise of a difference between the Scotch-Irish and the Irish, could launch an attack upon the patriotism of the immigrants of his own day. The restrictionist of 1910 could argue against further Jewish immigration, despite Haym Salomon and Judah Touro, because the entrants in the later period were nationally—some would have it, racially—unlike those of the earlier period, i.e. "East European." And the weight of that line of argument grew immeasurably heavier when it was supported by the popular contention that there had been a decisive, radical change in the character of immigration after 1880.

The impulse that drove some men thus to set themselves apart is worthy of understanding. But it must not obscure the fundamental fact that the stream of Jewish immigration, like that of all Americans, was continuous; and from the first trickles in 1607 until the final damming up in 1924, was nourished by substantially the same diversified sources.

To clear away the outmoded conception of national periods leaves the whole course of Jewish history in the United States without an explanation. With few exceptions, the entire corpus of literature on this subject rests slavishly on that three-ply nationalistic interpretation. But if there were representatives of the Jewries of every country in each era, then specific national properties can be ascribed to no single period. We must rule out references to Spanish traits, to German qualities, to Polish characteristics. And then there is nothing left—except significant problems awaiting significant answers.

In the present state of our information the answers are not yet available. But it may nevertheless be useful to define some of the questions, if only to indicate where our lack of knowledge is most oppressive.

As I have said, the traditional divisions of the Jewish past in the United States rest

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on a false basis. Yet the course of settlement was not uniform and uneventful. There were meaningful turning points that remain to be accounted for. The attitude of other Americans toward the Jews has, for instance, altered profoundly from time to time. In the 18th century and in the early 19th century, Christians in this country viewed the Jews not merely with tolerance but with a kind of exaggerated respect. A prevalent belief in the miraculous character of Jewish history and of Jewish survival, as represented in the writings of Hannah Adams, joined with the Christian idea of Israel as a mystery perpetuated in anticipation of the Second Coming, when the conversion of those who had rejected the Savior would herald the day of regeneration. Earnest missionary societies labored to hasten that end; and writers from Cotton Mather down pointed out that the wanderers must be well treated to bring closer the momentous occasion.

Toward the middle of the 19th century, that attitude died out. Instead, Jews were comprehended in the general multi-national view of the sources of American culture. They were one with the other diverse groups that were entering the United States; all would contribute to the evolution of a new man, the American.

By 1900, that optimistic picture had begun to fade out. Among some people it gave way to the conviction that the Jews were ineradicably different. "This great Polish swamp of miserable human beings, terrific in its proportions, threatens to draw itself off into our country," wrote a distinguished scientist. Some Americans, on the other hand, accepted the Jews, but with the proviso that they be assimilated to the point at which differences between Jews and non-Jews were no sharper in nature than differences among the various Christian sects.

These mutations in attitude were certainly consequential in the history of Jewish life in America. But we cannot ascribe them to a variance in the nativity of the Jews from period to period, once we have discarded the assumption of successive changes in the national origin of these immigrants. The clue must rather be sought in American society generally.

Similar ramifications in the process of Jewish adjustment in America, once concealed by the old interpretation, are now laid bare. The channels of mobility, for instance, have shifted radically in the course of the last one hundred and fifty years. In the 18th century, the Jews who moved upward in the social scale did so through overseas trade; in the mid-19th century, they resorted to retail business; more recently they have advanced primarily through the professions, and through certain limited forms of industrial entrepreneurship.

Under the old dispensation it was simple to point out that the Spanish Jews were naturally adapted to be merchants, that the Germans had a propensity for business, and the Eastern Europeans for learning or the clothing industry. But the nationalistic pattern simply does not fit, to say nothing of the fact that no one ever troubled to explain what peculiarities in the Spanish character were advantageous in managing ships, what in the German in managing department stores.

The whole problem must be reexamined in terms of the development of the American economy and of the place in it of the Jews.

An analogous situation prevails with regard to the internal structure of the Jewish community. We know practically nothing about the very deep and very real divisions within the Jewish community at any given time. Too often, the premise that all Jewish immigrants at a specific moment originated in the same place fathered the erroneous conclusion that they were all the same and in substantial agreement with each other. A pervasive fog has thus blotted out some of the most fruitful controversies and most productive dissensions in Jewish life.

THREE important developments within the American Jewish community will illustrate the manner in which major problems, long unformulated, need now to be confronted. It seemed obvious to the first writers on the subject that the use of the Sephardic

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minhag (order of service) in the 18th century was the result of the fact that American Jews were Spanish or of Spanish descent. Hyman Grinstein's study of the New York community in that period (*The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654-1860,* Jewish Publication Society of America, 1945), revealed that the Sephardic influence originated not in Spain but in the imperial capital, London. In this connection the whole question of the sources of early American Judaism might be worth reopening. A study in the light of the colonial status of the continent, of the absence of a rabbinate or of a learned laity, and of the mixture of men from many lands could not fail to produce illuminating results.

The Reform movement in America has generally been regarded as an importation from Germany, or at least its attractiveness when it took hold has been explained by the German character of the Jews in the United States. Now, Isaac Mayer Wise himself was not a German and, while he may have had some contact with the German movement before he emigrated, he developed his own distinctive ideas only after he came to the United States. In any case, the experience of the congregation in Charleston where there were earlier tentative efforts toward the same end, showed indigenous influences working in the general direction of Reform independently of what was happening in Europe.

It is pertinent to note that there were analogous trends in the other immigrant religions. Both the Lutheran and the Catholic churches, for instance, were for long periods divided by controversies over Americanization, controversies which displayed suggestive likenesses to the struggles over Reform Judaism. On the intellectual level, we find the same discussions as to the place of rationalism and ethics as against faith and mysticism. And on the practical level there was the same uneasiness among communicants—immigrant masses, growing in numbers on one side, and, on the other, the "Americans," fewer but superior in social status.

Certainly there is a most neglected and a most fertile field for study in the origin and development of these movements. In Judaism, as in the other religions, traditional forms slowly adapted themselves to the conditions of the American environment, to contact on free and equal terms with Gentiles, to the challenge of separation of church from state and from education. More generally, it would be fruitful to try to weigh the impact of American influences upon a wide variety of Jewish religious forms in the United States. The offices of rabbi and *hazan* are not here what they were across the Atlantic; Conservative Judaism seems to have sprung entirely from conditions local to the United States.

Finally, the history of Zionism may be studied to advantage in the same way. I would not minimize the importance of the European background of the struggle for a Jewish homeland. Yet in the United States the development of the movement as a popular phenomenon is impressively akin to the activities of other immigrant groups laboring toward similar ends. The Irish battle for independence, the German striving for unity, showed, in America, a high measure of parallelism with Zionism in aspirations, objectives, methods, and even in divided counsels. That may be coincidental. But if we rid ourselves of the notion that Zionism was no more than an importation by Polish Jews, we are likely to perceive that there was, on the contrary, something in the nature of settlement in the New World that rendered immigrants enthusiastic about such causes.

Thus far, I have mentioned problems that were specifically Jewish, that is, that were encompassed within the communal functions of the group. These subjects have been written about, although, I think, on the whole badly. But there is a wide range of other matters which have rarely been touched upon. The Jews also lived in a broader society; they participated in the total American culture; and there was a constant interplay of influence between the life of the Jewish group and the life of the whole group. A competent study of the Jewish

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press, of the Jewish stage, or of Jewish charitable institutions would throw light both on the development of Jewish culture and the development of the American press, the American stage, and American charitable institutions. Understanding these facets of Jewish life would unquestionably contribute to understanding American society, where such group activity plays a critical part.

On this aspect of the problem, our historiography has been particularly one-sided, for it has concentrated only on the survivors, on those who remained Jews, and continued to lead Jewish lives. I know of no attempts to study the causes of "leakage," to assess the extent of loss of faith or of deviations away from the community. Probably there were in the 19th century and early in this century a large number of conversions. I say, probably, because the weight of much scattered evidence seems to indicate that. I do not know; no one knows. Yet it is certainly important in understanding the elements of cohesion in the group to know not only why some people remain Jews, but also why others do not.

Whether Americanization led to the strengthening or the weakening of the community, it entailed all sorts of interesting problems of acculturation. The extent of our ignorance of these matters is appalling. The Jewish family, for instance, is conventionally described as granite-like, as resistant to change, and as possessing a magnetic hold over its members. However, in novels, and in personal narratives like E. G. Stern's *My Mother and I*, we catch glimpses of elements of instability and strain. And from time to time we encounter stray bits of evidence that strengthen that impression. In 1912, Arthur Holitscher, a German socialist visiting the United States, spent some time among the hobos; he noticed a large proportion of Jews in the ranks of the vagrants, a fact which he took as evidence of disrupted family life. All we have is such fragmentary data, from which no one could venture to leap to any conclusions.

All these cases underline the need for studying the experience of the Jews as the experience of an immigrant group. What is important is not that three thousand were here in 1776 but that they were still on their way in the hundreds of thousands after 1900. Like the other peoples who came to build the New World, their history is the history of the adjustment of old ways to new conditions, of old forms to new contents. And their history must be viewed as an aspect of that process of adaptation.

The Jews did not come empty-handed to the United States. But blanket references to tradition and heritage are unenlightening unless we know how those affected—and were affected by—the American context into which they were brought.

Almost thirty years ago, Edward Channing noted in his extensive *History of the United States* that the story of the Jews in America was less completely written and less understood than that of any other major ethnic element in the population of the nation. Three decades have gone by since Channing made those discouraging remarks. But the lapse of time has not added to the total fund of our available knowledge of the American Jewish past. A series of general books have mechanically ground out the same old routine. Occasional biographies have thrown light on the work of notable individuals. But in the realm of writing that digs to the bed-rock of the subject, a few works—the study of New York previously mentioned, for example, and Yivo's (the Yiddish Scientific Institute) account of the labor movement—stand out in lonely and uncomfortable isolation.

This is a deplorable situation. Historians in general find here an intolerable gap in the understanding of the development of American society; they know they cannot estimate the role of an important component of the national population. The gap is even more regrettable from the point of view of the thinking Jews who are today attempting to understand the nature of their identity as a group within American society. At a time when the meanings of Judaism and of its cultural orientation are everywhere being

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re-examined, the absence of the raw material for a comprehension of the Jewish past in America is a most dangerous handicap.

The remedy will come from a fresh approach to the history of the Jews as the history of an immigrant group, one of many participating in the development of the United States. But to be written right, the history must be freed of the burden of a defensive attitude. It must cease to be apologetic; it cannot afford to be distorted by the necessity for justification. The approach must be open and unhackneyed. Leaving behind the respectably heroic individuals, it will rather seek the key to the past in the struggles of the great mass of humble men and women who tried to carry across the ocean a tradition embodied in a way of life.

AND SO BE DONE

JACOB SLOAN

THEIR resolution at the opened gates
Ten days between the writing and the sealing
Changed no crown in their suspended fate.
All days were New Year's, all were days of healing,
All days of awe, and of happy kneeling:

The shepherd note of the banished son
Fell straight into the chariot of the king;
Straightway perceived among the barefoot ones,
His dancing shone beyond the peasant ring;
Israel's pleasant voice was meant to sing.

If we could sing that song, we would be glad,
Or walk a piece with Benjamin the third,
Or know the troubles Hananiah had—
But we should sing too sweet, and be absurd,
Or feel too much, and perish at a word.

If Tevye could hear our pleading now,
Would he turn his ancient horse aside?
We could not call a prophet from his plow—
But would Carmel join the countryside,
If we should say with Job: Men think, and gods decide?

It is not true that they had certainty
Of grace, and we have none.
What they could do, and we must learn to be,
Is simply not to know, and so be done.
To laugh, and shrug a shoulder at the air:
Every therefore poses a new why.
Never question the essential one:
Samson was defeated by his hair;
Let Dagon's pillars stand, and keep your eye.

We are not pieces, they were not entire.
We, like them, deny the miracle.
They, like us, saw no bush on fire.
That was less a vision than a will,
And we both agree: We will no more.
It were better not to have been made,
It were best to be always still.
Now that we are, ask not what we are for:
Put it off; hope, and be afraid.

JACOB SLOAN has published a volume of poetry, *Generation of Journey*, has translated many poems from Yiddish and Hebrew, some of which have appeared in COMMENTARY, and is responsible for many of the translations in *The Language of Faith*, a collection of Jewish prayers published by Schocken Books. Mr. Sloan was born in Brooklyn in 1918 and attended Brooklyn College and the Jewish Theological Seminary. He is an editor on the staff of Schocken Books.

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PAUL ROSENFELD: THREE PHASES

Portrait of a Humanist Man of Letters

EDMUND WILSON

THE death of Paul Rosenfeld has left me not only shocked at the unexpected loss of a friend, but with a feeling of dismay and disgust at the waste of talent in the United States. Paul, when I first knew him—in 1922, I think—was one of the most exciting critics of the "American Renaissance." I had read, while in the army in France, an essay on Sibelius in the *New Republic,* which had upon me the exhilarating effect that wartime reading sometimes does, and later, when I was back in New York, a longer study of Richard Strauss, the great musical hero of the time, which brought into the writing itself something of the Straussian brilliance but probed with a very sure hand what was specious and vulgar in this composer. It was the first really searching criticism that I had ever seen of Strauss, and both these essays amazed me. They had a kind of fullness of tone, a richness of vocabulary and imagery, and a freedom of the cultural world that were quite different from the schoolmasterish criticism that had become the norm in the United States.

Musical Portraits, in 1920, the first book that collected these pieces, seemed at the time absolutely dazzling. Paul told me, when I knew him later, that the point at which he had felt his maturity had been the moment when he realized with pride that he could turn out as good an article as Huneker; but actually he was better than Huneker, who, useful though he was in his role, always remained a rather harried journalist, trying to produce a maximum of copy in order to get money to go abroad. Paul was a serious writer who was working from New York as a base. One had always had the impression that Huneker came in through the back door at Scribner's in a day when the arts were compelled to give precedence to money and respectability, and that there had been something in Bernard Shaw's prophecy that, if he stayed in the United States, he would never be anything but a "clever slum-mocker"; and one now heard depressing reports that he was old, poor, and ill in Brooklyn.

But Paul Rosenfeld seemed the spirit of a new and more fortunate age, whose cosmopolitanism was not self-conscious and which did not have to be on the defensive about its interest in the variety of life. The portraits of Paul's first book dramatized modern music as no one had done before; they brought into range a whole fascinating world, coherent though international, of per-

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WITH the death of Paul Rosenfeld in 1946, we lost one of the influential personalities of the cultural renaissance that followed the First World War. Born in New York City in 1890, Paul Rosenfeld attended Yale and Columbia Universities, and then went on to distinguish himself as a music critic on *Dial*—one of the chief intellectual centers of the period. As critic, novelist, and man of culture, he made a deep impression upon his contemporaries of the 20's—an impression that is now beginning to renew itself after the years of neglect that preceded his death. Testimony to the strength and quality of this impression is here given by EDMUND WILSON, our foremost literary critic. His books of criticism include *Axel's Castle* (1931), *The Triple Thinkers* (1938), and *The Wound and the Bow* (1941). He has also published work in the history of ideas (*To the Finland Station,* 1940) and is the author of two novels, *I Thought of Daisy* (1929) and *Memoirs of Hecate County* (1946). Mr. Wilson was born in Red Bank, New Jersey, in 1895, and was graduated from Princeton University. His latest book, *Europe Without Baedeker,* an account of a trip to Europe immediately after the war, was published recently by Doubleday.

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sonality, poetics, texture, mood. Paul Rosenfeld at that time enjoyed a prestige of the same kind as Mencken's and Brooks', though it was not so widely felt as the former's.

PAUL had inherited a comfortable income, and he built himself at Westport, Connecticut, a small and attractive house, where he lived alone with his work and entertained his friends. The first time I ever saw him was in Paris some time in the summer of 1921, and I was dining alone one night in a favorite Italian restaurant—very clean and rather austere: I remember it as always quiet and filled with a clear twilight—to which I had been taken first by somebody during the war and to which I liked to return, ordering almost always the same meal as the first time: ravioli and Asti Spumante. A party of three sat down at the table just across from mine, and though I had never seen any of them before, I recognized them soon as Paul Rosenfeld, Sherwood Anderson, and Anderson's wife, the sculptress Tennessee Mitchell.

I had heard in New York that Paul was taking the Andersons to Europe, where Anderson had never been, and I observed the party with interest and heard snatches of their conversation. Tennessee Mitchell had the aspect and the manner of a raw-boned prairie woman, and I was touched by Paul's obvious effort to approximate, for her benefit, a modestly folksy manner. I was reminded of the incident later when I read in Sherwood Anderson's memoirs that he had sat in the Tuileries one day—he is here apostrophizing himself—with "the tears running from your eyes, because you thought everything around you so beautiful." It was all very typical of the period, and so are my first memories of Paul after I got to know him in New York.

I spent a weekend with him once at Westport—some time in 1922—and read him an essay I had just written about T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land* on the occasion of its getting the *Dial* prize. In the city I had been leading at that time rather a frenetic life, and I remember what a relief it was to talk about art with Paul in an atmosphere completely free from the messy dissipation and emotion that were characteristic of the 20's, and to get a good night's sleep in a house where everything was quiet and simple. I had a delightful dream, which still comes back to me quite distinctly, of little figures that were really alive though much less than life-size, dancing with slow grace to an exquisite Mozartian music which filled me with peace and joy. It was an antidote to the stridencies of the jazz age, which Paul's spirit had somehow managed to exorcise. He loathed jazz in all its raw forms and could only accept it transmuted by the style of a Stravinsky or a Copland.

With his fair reddish hair and mustache, his pink cheeks and his limpid brown eyes, his good clothes which always followed the Brooks-cut college model, his presence, short though he was, had a certain authority and distinction. It was something that made Anderson call him the well-dressed man of American prose. He had a knack of turning pretty little speeches, and he was also genuinely considerate in a way that was rare in that era; but he could be forthright when the occasion demanded, and, though naturally candid and warm, he would retire—what always amused me—at a suspicion of imposture or imposition, into a sceptical and ironic reserve. He was, I think, the only man I have known of whom it could truly be said that he possessed a Heinesque wit, and I always thought it a pity that his humor, which contributed so much to the pleasure of being with him, should have figured so little in his writing. (Since writing this, however, I have looked into his admirable little book, *An Hour with American Music,* and I see that it is full of wit.)

WHEN I got to know him better we sometimes compared notes about our childhood and education. He had gone to school on the Hudson and had afterwards been graduated from Yale, and the latter institution, though he seemed to feel a certain respect for it, rather oppressed him at the time

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he had been there; but he had been fortunate in being able to escape to spend his summer vacations in Europe. When he had once found out, he told me, that there existed somewhere else an artistic and social and intellectual world larger and more exciting than anything he had known in America, and that he could always go back to it later, he found that he could endure New Haven, to which he was so ill adapted, without fears of suffocation. He had grown up in uptown New York in a German Jewish household and he had never belonged to any church or been trained in any religion; but he had had at home a grounding in classical German culture, musical and literary. When he went to Europe in the summer, he loved to visit a German uncle, who was something of a *bon viveur*.

Paul's parents had both died when he was young, and his only close relative was a sister. He never married and, so far as I could see, had no real desire to marry, enjoying the bachelor's life which his moderate means made possible. His strongest tie was undoubtedly with Stieglitz, toward whom he stood in something like a filial relation; and the group around Stieglitz became for him both family and church. The only traditionally and specifically Jewish trait that ever came, in my intercourse with Paul, as something alien that blocked understanding between us was the quality of his piety toward Stieglitz, whom he accepted and revered as a prophet, following his direction in the same unquestioning spirit that is sometimes exemplified by the followers of Marx, Freud, and Trotsky; and his range as a writer on the plastic arts was limited by the exclusiveness of his interest in the work of the Stieglitz group. It was difficult, if not impossible, to persuade him to pay attention to any contemporary American painter who was not a protégé of Stieglitz's, and if Stieglitz had excommunicated a refractory or competitive disciple, Paul, following the official directive, would condemn him not merely as an artist but as a reprobate who had somehow committed unpardonable moral treason. He had the tone of the old-fashioned brother whose sister has fallen to shame or the member of a Marxist sect reacting to the name of a heretic.

For the rest, his affectionate and generous nature had to spend itself mainly in the sympathy that he brought to the troubles of his friends, and in the tireless encouragement of talent. He was tactful and unobtrusive in helping people who needed help, his judgment was usually shrewd and sound, and he did not want thanks in return. His taking the Andersons to Europe is an example that happens to be known of the kind of thing he liked to do, and one has heard of his finding, at a critical time, resources for a now famous composer; but he undoubtedly did more for more people than anyone will ever know.

It remains in my mind that he was present at the deathbed of Randolph Bourne, desperately feeding him oxygen in the effort to keep him alive. Bourne had been one of the most remarkable of the group that had founded the *Seven Arts*. As a hunchback, he was unfit for the services and thus set free to repudiate the war as an able-bodied writer could hardly have done so roundly; and the intellectual light and the moral passion, the mastery of self-expression, that led people to forget his deformity as soon as he began to talk, made Bourne's friends of that era feel that he was keeping alive spiritual values that might otherwise have gone by the board. "When he died," Paul wrote, "we knew the entire younger generation in America had gone . . . . We see the size of him plainly in the bitter moments in which we realize how vacant the scene has become in the many fields to which he brought the light of his own clear nature!"

II

PAUL later sold his house at Westport and took a little corner apartment in an old and elevator-less house on the west side of Irving Place. There, however, he continued to flourish. He liked to give evening parties which were all the more agreeable for being of rather an old-fashioned kind. What was unusual in the dry

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20's was that there was very little liquor served: a highball or two, or a little punch; and poets read their poetry and composers played their music. One met Ornstein, Milhaud, Varèse; Cummings, Hart Crane, and Marianne Moore; the Stieglitzes and all their group; the Stettheimers, Mumford, Kreymborg. One of the images that remains with me most vividly is the bespectacled figure of Copland, at that period lean and long-nosed, gray-faced, and rather unearthly, bending over the piano as he chanted in a high, cold, and passionate voice a poem of Ezra Pound's for which he had written a setting.

In those days I saw a good deal of Paul in a business as well as a friendly way, for I was working first on *Vanity Fair*, then on the *New Republic*, and Paul wrote a good deal for both. He grew rather stout at this time, and his style betrayed a tendency toward floridness. He felt afterwards, he told me, that his writing—like so many other things during the boom—had, to its detriment, become somewhat over-inflated. My impression is that when people say that they do not like Paul Rosenfeld's style, they are thinking of characteristics that only became rampant in some of the work of this period, and that they have no real idea of his criticism either before or after. As an editor, I had sometimes to struggle with him over the locutions and vocabulary of his essays, and I am fully aware of his faults. He had spent so much time in Europe and he read so much French and German that he could never quite keep his English distinct from his other languages, and habitually wrote "ignore" as if it meant the same thing as *ignorer* and "genial" as if it meant possessing genius. He had also a way of placing adverbs that used to set my teeth on edge, as did some of these adverbs themselves, such as 'doubtlessly" and "oftentimes." There were moments when he *did* overwrite, working himself up into a state of exaltation with romantic Germanic abstractions that sounded a little ridiculous in English. But, going back to his essays today, one is not much bothered by this or even necessarily conscious of it. One finds a body of musical criticism that covers the modern field more completely than one had remembered and that stands up both as writing and as interpretation so solidly as to make quite unimportant these minor idiosyncrasies and slips.

THERE is of course an objection to Paul's writing that is based on disapproval on principle of the romantic and impressionistic school he enthusiastically represented. In the serious literary journals, a new tone had just been set by T. S. Eliot's *The Sacred Wood*, which was spare and terse in style, analytical and logical in treatment. Paul, for lack of any intellectual instrument adapted to dealing with literary ideas (though he was expert at dealing with musical ones), was somewhat less satisfactory—except when writing of certain kinds of poetry that had something in common with music—on the subject of literature than he was on music and painting; but it was very unjust that this fashion should have prejudiced against him the editors of the kind of magazine on which he most depended for a market. The same tendency appeared in the musical world; and the critics—though less, I think, the composers—complained of his lack of scholarship in the technical side of music. To this a writer who is not a musician can only reply that it seems to him that the moment the critic departs from the technical analysis of a score, he is writing impressionistic criticism; and that Berlioz in his essays on Beethoven's symphonies, or Debussy, when putting on record such an opinion as that Edvard Grieg was a marshmallow stuffed with snow, was just as much an impressionistic critic as Paul Rosenfeld ever was. Berlioz and Debussy, of course, were a great deal more literary and programmatic than the generation of Schoenberg and Stravinsky have liked to be thought to be; but I believe that Paul was right in insisting that every valid work of art owes its power to giving expression to some specific human experience and connecting it with some human ideal. For musicians it must of course be profitable to read the kind of score-by-score study that has been made by Albert Berger, for exam-

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ple, of the development of Aaron Copland, but, as a layman who merely listens to music, I do not see that it is easy to dismiss the interpretations given by Paul of the emotional and social content of the more "abstract" modern composers: Schoenberg and Stravinsky, Hindemith, Bartok, and Berg.

All these years we talked much of such matters. The kind of writing I did myself aimed at something rather different from his, and he horrified me once by saying that his idea of good prose was something that was laid on like a thick coat of paint; but we had in common a fundamental attitude and invoked a common cultural tradition which it is easiest to call humanistic. Among the few things that I really look back upon with anything like nostalgia in the confusion and waste of the 20's are such conversations as those with Paul when we would sit in his corner room, beneath his little collection of Hartleys and O'Keeffes and Marins, surrounded by his shelves full of Nietzsche and Wagner, Strindberg, Shaw, and Ibsen, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, Flaubert, Claudel, and Proust, Henry James and Poe, and the English poets that he had read at Yale; or walk back and forth at night between my place and his.

He liked New York, was a thorough New Yorker, and—except for a few weeks in the summer when he would visit the Stieglitzes at Lake George and, Georgia O'Keeffe once told me, take the same walk every afternoon—he rarely, save for out-of-town concerts and a few out-of-town lectures, had the curiosity to leave it. He did visit the Andersons in Virginia, and once got as far as New Mexico—when Georgia O'Keeffe was there—and even saw an Indian corn dance; but it was difficult to make him take interest in any but the most self-consciously aesthetic aspects of American cultural life.

I tried again and again to get him to read such writers as Ring Lardner and Mark Twain, but I never had the least success. When I finally resorted to the device of giving him *Huckleberry Finn* as a Christmas present, he obstinately refused to open it, having heard that Henry James had once said that Mark Twain wrote for immature minds. I told him one day, later on when the first liveliness of the 20's was spent, that he would not have lived very differently if he had been the leading music critic of Frankfort, Dresden, or Munich; but he protested at once against this. He could never be so free, he said, in Germany—or anywhere else except New York.

III

THE depression was disastrous for Paul. His income dwindled almost to nothing; and he was forced to give up Irving Place, moving downtown to a small apartment on 11th Street just off Fifth Avenue, then finally to a less accessible one in the far reaches of West 11th Street. The *Dial* suspended publication in 1929; the *New Republic* was in the hands of an editor of whom it might almost be said, as the Nazis said of themselves, that when he heard the word *culture* he reached for his gun. Paul, for the first time in his life, was obliged to resort to real hackwork: little odd jobs and reviews, for which he was not well paid. He developed diabetes and grew thin; and something, I believe, went wrong with his personal affairs—though of this I never heard him speak.

The staffs and the principal contributors of the *Dial* and the *New Republic*, both non-commercial affairs financed by rich patrons, had been groups of serious writers who had had lunches and dinners together where plans and current events were discussed, and who had been part of Paul's social life as well as a stimulus to his work. But now, when endowments were drying up, there was a movement toward the political Left, and such groupings and common undertakings as the New York "intellectuals," as they were now always called, continued to go in for in the 30's were mostly oriented in the direction of Communism. Paul intensely disliked all this, and, though one of the great merits of his criticism had been its insight into musical personalities as the reflections of their national and social backgrounds, he would indignantly deny at this time that art had anything to do with

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history. When I argued such questions with him, I found that "the artist" meant for him a being unique and godlike, and that Paul would not admit for a minute that a philosopher or a scientist or a statesman could achieve an equal creative importance.

On one occasion he was somehow persuaded to attend an election rally held by the Communists in Cooper Union, at which there were to be speeches by writers who had announced that they would vote for the Communists and who paid their homage to Communism as a literary restorative and bracer in the vein of the new convert to evangelism or the patent-medicine testimonial. But, seated in a conspicuous place in one of the front rows, he attracted unfavorable attention by pointedly refusing to rise when the "International" was sung.

I was deep in Left activities myself, but I always continued to see him and occasionally went to concerts with him. If you dined with him in his apartment, he cooked and served the dinner; and the difficulty was, if you ate out with him in one of the Greenwich Village restaurants, ever to pay back his hospitality, as he invariably snatched the check and insisted on settling it himself.

Even now that he had no regular platform, he continued to go to concerts and make notes on his impressions of the music he had heard and to put them away in his files under the names of the various composers; and he continued to look for new talent and to acquire new protégés—though he sometimes had fits of gloom in which he would declare that American music was an abomination of desolation.

He was sharply unsympathetic with the tendency of American composers to abandon the abstruse researches into which they had been led by Schoenberg, the high seasoning and classicizing and virtuosity of abbreviation characteristic of Stravinsky and others, and to try to produce a music that could be heard and enjoyed by bigger audiences than those of the Composers' League. He was shocked, almost personally hurt, when Americans whose work he had thought promising did anything for the radio or Hollywood or published popular books. He expressed his views on this general subject in his essay on Kurt Weill and *Gebrauchsmusik,* in which he asserted that all music was useful, since "all works of musical art express essences and ideas and thus, with their symbols of the inner truth of life, provide the best of bases of social relationships." But there was of course no reason why composers who "deeply felt the spirit of symbols of social rituals" should not provide these rituals with music—so long as the music provided "conveyed an individual interpretation of the meanings of the ritual" and not merely "general and conventional symbols and a sort of collective expression." "Let us," he concluded, "by all means have *Gebrauchsmusik.* But let it be the work of artists, not of 'revolutionary' academicians." It will be seen that these considered and formulated views were less severe than his instinctive attitude toward the practice of American composers; and I guessed that this attitude was part of his feeling of being rather out of things and reluctant to see other artists care anything for popular success.

But it worried me to feel, as time went on, that he was beginning to lose his self-confidence. He had put a good deal of work into the writing of what I took from his descriptions to be a kind of symphonic novel based on a visit he had made to Rome, but he had decided that his whole conception was vitiated by some moral falsity and he withheld it from publication, which seemed to me a morbid symptom. A healthy writer either knows what he is doing or doesn't discover his error till long after he has published his book.

The persecution of the Jews by Hitler came later to weigh upon him and to become overpoweringly identified with the difficulties he was facing at fifty. The times had not brought to fulfillment that creative and enlightened era of which we had seemed to be witnessing the dawn when the *Seven Arts* was founded: totalitarian states and class pressures were closing down on the

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artistic elite. The independent American journalism that had flared up for a while in the 20's had given way to the streamlined commercial kind, and the non-commercial magazines were composed for the most part, by this time, of second-rate academic papers and the commentaries of talmudic Marxists. Even the *New Yorker*, more liberal and literate than most of the new magazines, and in its own way quite independent, was unable to find a place for Paul: it, too, had a conventional style, which sometimes ran to insipidity through the anxiety of the editors to eliminate anything in the least unusual. It was primarily a humorous weekly and had a department that exploited the absurdities that appeared in other papers, so that the *New Yorker* had itself to be always on its guard against writing that might be thought ridiculous. It was one of the most cruel blows of Paul Rosenfeld's later years that the *New Yorker* would not print his articles after asking him, as he assumed, to act as their regular art critic. Paul's prose, as I knew, had its blemishes, but at its best it would have been hopelessly refractory to the *New Yorker* processing mill.

There was at that time not a single periodical that would print the work of a writer simply because he knew his subject and wrote about it well. Paul sometimes showed signs of a fear that he had been made the victim of a boycott; and at others was too ready to blame himself.

He said to me once that his inheritance from his grandmother had unfitted him to struggle with the world; that he had thrown up his first and only job —as a reporter on a New York paper—simply because he did not need it to live. Certainly he was unfitted for putting himself over or making terms with editors and publishers; no one ever had less sense of business. He never could understand that writing was a commodity like any other, which, from the moment one lacked a patron, had to be sold in a hard-boiled way. The world came more and more to divide itself for him into two classes, black and white: the negative forces of darkness that were closing down to crush him and the few pure children of light who survived and could heal and save.

I was distressed by him in these latter days and used to wonder how the circumstances had been combined so that a shift in economic conditions had had the result of undermining so able a man by way of his very virtues even more than by that of his weaknesses. Certainly it was unwise of Paul to have depended as much as he did on the writing of musical criticism. Since he was himself not a musician but a writer, he should not have tied his talent up with the reporting of contemporary concerts. It is impossible for a master of words completely to express himself by merely rendering the effects of some other art; and I have never really understood why Paul did not tackle some bigger subject—a history of American music or a biography of some composer—which would have got him an advance from a publisher and supplied him with a sustaining interest. One might have said the same thing about Huneker; but it is no great comfort now to realize that Paul, in an age which prided itself on having emerged from the philistinism of Huneker's era, should have burnt out in much the same way and been left in the same neglect. The burning out and the public indifference seem somehow to work together. They are an old and depressing story in the American intellectual world.

WHEN I got back to New York from Europe in the autumn of 1945, I spent a wonderful evening with Paul, which, though I may have seen him once or twice afterwards, has left me with a last lively impression that I am extremely glad to have. He was in very much better spirits than he had been during the years of the war. He had received from a foundation a substantial grant to do a book of literary standing. And it seemed to cheer him to hear about Europe now that the war was over and the arts might be expected to revive. I told him about my enthusiasm for Benjamin Britten's opera, *Peter Grimes*, which I had heard that summer in London. And both of us were glad

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to find someone to whom to express ourselves freely about the current state of letters and art.

He was angry over his treatment at the hands of one of the highbrow quarterlies, the editor of which had first asked him to be a member of the advisory board, and had then refused to print his articles, keeping them, however, for months without letting him know about them. I had had with this same magazine an almost equally annoying experience; and I managed to make Paul laugh by describing to him an essay in which this portentous editor, in the course of a rigorous analysis of Macbeth's "Out, out, brief candle" speech, conducted in the rigorous spirit of the new "methodological" criticism, had said something like, "We cannot know why Shakespeare has chosen for death the curious adjective *dusty,* but the epithet has a quaint appropriateness that can be felt but hardly explained." We rapidly became so hilarious, abounding so, as Henry James would say, in our own old sense, affirming our convictions so heartily and making such delightful fun of the more tiresome of our contemporaries, that we went on till what was for Paul a late hour, walking the autumn streets and making stops for coffee and beer at Child's and the Lafayette, almost as if we had been back in the 20's, with the new era of American art just beginning to burst into life between Macdougal Street and Irving Place. Less than a year later, Paul died of a heart attack as he was coming out of a movie, to which he had gone alone.

And now, despite the miseries of his later years, he remains for me, looking back, one of the only sound features of a landscape that is strewn with deformations and wrecks: a being organically moral, on whom one could always rely, with a passion for creative art destructible only with life itself. I do not doubt that his musical criticism will be collected in an omnibus volume—as it already should have been—and will become in its field a classic.

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JEWISH INSECURITY AND AMERICAN REALITIES

A Prescription Against Mental Escapism

DAVID BERNSTEIN

SOONER or later everyone, I suppose, succumbs to the urge to rediscover his own land. After having been away from the United States entirely for many months, my wife and I recently traveled slowly across the country to California, and then back to the East.

More striking than anything else, we felt, was the pervading restlessness of people at this decade's whirling events. In the midst of dollars, there is fear of economic collapse; in the midst of safety, a foreboding of disaster.

In the hotel lobbies, bulletin boards were crowded with listings of patriotic rallies, meetings of veterans' organizations, civic gatherings. Local papers announced church suppers, religious revivals, women's club meetings. And in the larger cities, especially, the Jewish gatherings were markedly numerous.

These struck us particularly, because they dealt so largely with "emergencies" and "problems" (generally on a note far removed from the locality and its familiar concerns)—the world Jewish problem, the Palestine problem, the DP problem, the problem of anti-Semitism. Indeed, when I myself went to Portland to give a talk, the local newspaper printed an interview with me which erroneously quoted me as having said that all European Jews wanted to leave Europe at once, and that anti-Semitism in Europe was worse than it had ever been under Hitler—a misquotation arising, I was sure, not from malice or intention but from the sheer habit of hearing Jewish speakers say such things.

As we talked to individual Jews we found a similar and striking undercurrent of emergency. And we were impelled to conclude that, of all the insecure people in America (except for Negroes), Jews are the most unhappily insecure.

They did not appear so at the meetings we attended, for these were characterized by a "group" spirit which effectively shut out the rest of the world. But, once the meetings ended, we noticed the return of self-consciousness, of suspicion, of discomfort.

HITLER'S anti-Semitism succeeded in killing six million Jews, and to the rest, whether in Europe or in America, he bequeathed the assumption that their "Jewishness" is their outstanding and most vulnerable characteristic. In America this is breeding a new kind of separatism, almost entirely without positive content, which most often expresses itself in some form of emotional Jewish nationalism.

It may be oversimplification to describe this as mental flight from America. Yet there is in the phrase something strongly suggestive

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RECENTLY returned from a coast-to-coast tour, DAVID BERNSTEIN here reports on a deep uneasiness he noted among many American Jews as to their position and future in America, in the wake of the terror of Hitler's Germany and of anti-Semitic manifestations during the war period here. He here analyzes this mood of spiritual withdrawal, and attempts to unravel the tangle of emotions and confused thinking that feed this—to his mind—quite unwarrantedly negative attitude toward the promise of America for Jews. Born in Hollis, Long Island, in 1915, Mr. Bernstein was educated in New York, Albania, France, and Switzerland. During his service in the army, he edited *Fighting Facts*, a publication of the War Department's Pacific Information and Education Division, and later was appointed adviser to the President of the Philippines. His book *The Philippine Story* was recently published by Farrar, Straus. Mr. Bernstein contributed "Europe's Jews: Summer, 1947" to the August 1947 COMMENTARY, following a six months' stay in Europe.

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of the truth. Psychologically, many American Jews are uncomfortable here, though they cannot define the causes or the implications of their discomfort, and though they show themselves to be good and patriotic citizens. Their problem is not one of loyalty or subversion. It is one of adjustment; of discovering who they are, and working out their lives in terms of the realities of the world they live in—not the imaginary "realities," but the actual realities.

Their difficulty stems from the events in Europe and the tendency to assume that America and Europe are alike. It stems from the evidences of anti-Semitism in the United States and their exaggeration in the hands of too many professional speakers and writers. It stems, too, from the bewilderment of the individual Jew, who often finds himself in social and intellectual limbo because he really does not know what being a Jew means to himself and, therefore, to his world.

Hitler and all too many Jewish professionals have given him definitions which, fundamentally, are not greatly at odds. Their crux is that he is "separate," homeless, apart. In his American community he cannot reconcile the easy identification of everyone around him with the uncertainty of his own identity. He cannot even be sure that the next Jew will accept either his definition or his confusion. He wants very badly to have a "taken-for-granted" past, present, and future—like everyone else. Often, in search for peace of mind, he seizes some quick formula, so that he can stop thinking, stop arguing with himself.

IN GENEVA, a few months ago, I talked to a Polish Jew who, if I recall his career accurately, left Poland about fifteen years ago to escape anti-Semitism, went into business in Belgium, left for France when Hitler's Germany moved too close for comfort, skipped out of Paris a few months ahead of the Nazis, established himself in Tel Aviv during the war but discovered that he was not happy in Palestine, and wound up with a temporary job in Switzerland while waiting to enter the United States as an immigrant. This gentleman, a Zionist no longer, now felt that Christian-Jewish relations hinged on semantics.

"What is the Christian to think?" he inquired. "One Jew tells him we are a nation, and another says we are a religious group, and another says there is only a Jewish culture. Each Jew is certain that his definition is the only correct one, and that anyone who disagrees is probably anti-Semitic.

"The Christian is bewildered; so he becomes resentful and suspicious. The result is anti-Semitism. How much better it would be if we were simply to say that we don't know what we are. This would make sense to the Christian. He would look at the Jew and think, *'Eh bien, voilà un bonhomme* who doesn't know what he is; I can understand that!'"

My peripatetic friend's reasoning should, in all logic, make delightful sense in a lunatic world. As it happens, it does not. People who don't know what they are rarely make sense to people who are certain they do know what they are; and it is probable, anyway, that the whole question seems less important to non-Jews than to Jews.

No, peace of mind for Jews does not lie in influencing what the Gentiles think; it lies, first of all, in deciding what to think for themselves. Which means that we must satisfy ourselves as to who and what we are, in a context that gives us both identity and personal freedom.

Is the American Jew to be identified solely on the basis of his religion?

Such an identification must be qualified by so many explanations and rationalizations as to be utterly unrealistic, at least in the United States. There are, of course, many devout Jews who try to observe the rituals and ethics of Judaism; there are some who observe the rituals but forget the ethics; and there are others who observe the ethics but ignore the rituals. All of them, perhaps, do belong to a Jewish religious group, whether by intent or inertia.

But what of the Jews to whom the rituals are meaningless or even embarrassing, and the ethics recognizable only as they corre-

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spond to popular American concepts of good works, honesty, and charity?

It can be argued that such people are "bad Jews," to the same extent that Methodists who do not profess Methodism are simply "bad Methodists." The argument is not altogether convincing. No one bears a Methodist name, or speaks with a Methodist inflection, or lives in a Methodist neighborhood complete with Methodist delicatessen. Few colleges maintain Methodist quotas. The "bad Methodist" can get himself born, brought up, educated, married, employed, divorced, retired, and buried without being very much aware that he is a Methodist, good or bad. If he marries a Baptist, he has few ensuing problems; if he sends his children to a Congregational Sunday school because it is more conveniently located or more fashionable, scarcely an eyebrow will rise. Can all this be said of "bad Jews"?

It can also be argued that nearly all American Jews, even the "bad" ones, turn to the rituals of Judaism in such supreme moments as marriage and death. This, too, needs further examination. The "bad" Jews, generally, are second generation or later. Their reversion to the rituals of Judaism is often no more than a concession to the sensibilities of their elders; and as the generations succeed one another the demand for such concessions decreases acceleratively.

Is the religious definition valid at all? Of course it is—for those who are personally aware of their Judaism as the faith by which they live. For the others—including the "bad Jews"—it has little meaning.

Are American Jews, then, identifiable as members of a Jewish nation or, in the mystical jargon of politics, a "people"?

What is a nation? A group of human beings recognizing a common history and a common culture, yearning for a common destiny, assuming common habits, and generally attached to a specific piece of the earth's surface; and, perhaps most important of all, feeling at home with one another. This definition, I think, can be applied to Americans, Filipinos, Swedes, and most other "nations."

Would it apply to Jews, including the five million American Jews? The convinced Zionist would say yes, without hesitation. He would insist that it is easy to find the thread of common Jewish history and culture through thousands of years; he would say, "The common destiny is ours to make, the common habits are ours to develop, the piece of land is *Eretz Yisrael*, and as for feeling at home as a Jew—have you ever lived in Tel Aviv?"

All of which is perfectly valid for those who accept it. For nationhood is a pattern of belief and feeling rather than of fact. Its key words are: recognizing, yearning, assuming, attached, feeling. They depend upon emotional and intellectual willingness to recognize, yearn, assume, and so forth. If a Jew outside of Palestine chooses not to be a participant in the Jewish nation, then no rulebook on earth can force him to be one.

This fact need not conflict with one's approval (or disapproval) of a Jewish state in Palestine or anywhere else. Those who choose to be members of the Jewish nation can settle there or otherwise affiliate themselves with it. Those who choose not to do so can stay away, even though they may favor the Zionist cause, and aid it. If one approves of any form of nationalism, then one must agree that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with Zionism, except the widespread propaganda of those Zionist spokesmen who insist that Jewish nationhood automatically includes all people who happen to be Jews.

There are some five million Jews in the United States. Most of them have no intention of moving to Palestine. They are Americans emotionally and intellectually and often more so than they fully realize. Many are Zionists, which is as consonant with American patriotism as, say, favoring the aspirations of the Irish or the Indonesian nationalists. Sympathy or even assistance for the Irish or Indonesians does not make one less an American; and by favoring Zionism one does not necessarily become a Jewish national.

The American Zionist must therefore, it would seem, delimit his Zionism. He can

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support the Zionist cause for all he is worth; but unless he is willing to give up his moral responsibility as an American, there is a line beyond which he dare not go, especially after the Jewish state is formally established in Palestine. The line itself is easy to mark off: it does not preclude support for the Jewish state; but it does preclude a national loyalty—whether to Ireland or Indonesia or to Jewish Palestine—*above* one's loyalty to America.

This would seem a rather obvious conclusion. But it is not obvious at all, unfortunately, to many American Jews who have taken the mental flight from America without realizing that they have done so, and whose inner contradictions remain to be settled.

LET us consider the position, for example, of a Jewish leader like Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. Here is a distinguished rabbi, a free American since childhood, a respected citizen of Cleveland, a leader in Ohio Republican circles, who is also the foremost Zionist in America and not long ago was spokesman before the United Nations for the Jewish Agency. As an American citizen, he represented a body which has had the unique status of being a government and yet not a government. In his highly effective presentation of the Zionist case, there were strange and irreconcilable passages.

"We mean," said Rabbi Silver, "to be good neighbors, not only to the Arab state of Palestine, but to the Arab states throughout the Middle East. And certainly we mean scrupulously to respect the equal rights of the Arab population in the free and democratic Jewish state."

Who is "we" in this declaration? Obviously, the citizens of the proposed Jewish state. But a speaker who uses the first person plural is including himself. Yet Rabbi Silver has not given up his American citizenship, nor has he moved his family from Shaker Boulevard to the shores of the Mediterranean.

A little later in his speech, Rabbi Silver came to the problem of force in Palestine. Here his words were impersonal, the words of a trial lawyer representing a client. He began to talk about "them," not "us." He said: "The Jewish people of Palestine stands ready to assume immediately all responsibilities which the establishment of the Jewish state will involve. . . . The Jewish state, when it is established, will respect the sovereignty of its neighbor states as fully as it will defend its own. The Jewish people in Palestine is prepared to defend itself. It is not impressed by idle threats," and so forth. The shift from "we" to "them" is smooth but hardly consistent.

When Professor Oscar Lange of the University of Chicago decided, at the war's end, to throw in his lot with the new Polish government, he relinquished his American citizenship and resumed his status as a Pole; after which he was appointed Polish Ambassador to the United States and Polish representative on the United Nations Security Council. I do not suggest that Dr. Silver should do likewise, once there is a Jewish state. I do suggest that the contradiction which Dr. Lange resolved satisfactorily, Dr. Silver has not resolved at all. To the extent that this is merely a problem for a thoughtful man to settle with his own conscience, it is none of our business. To the extent that the same kind of unresolved conflict now involves the thinking and feeling of thousands of American Jews, it certainly is our business—for it raises the question of our quality as Americans.

CAN American Jews be identified as a group by their common culture? By Jewish culture, generally, one means not only the ancient literature and customs, but also all of the writings and output of Jewish thinkers and artists. There has been a specifically Jewish culture, and there still is, but it is largely unknown to the mass of Jews in America. They may occasionally read a translated poem or two, or a story by Sholom Aleichem; they may recognize a Chagall in the museum; but these are skimpy foundations on which to build a case.

To a very great extent, Jewish literature and art in recent centuries have been East-

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ern European in origin, with values, standards, and assumptions which each day become more exotic and strange to American Jews. By now, one would assert, except for the Yiddishists and a few others, Jewish culture means little to most American Jews.

And what of those who accept no positive definitions as American Jews, yet insist on an identification nevertheless? "We are Jews," they say, "not by religion, or nationality, or culture, but simply because other people stick the label on us, because there is anti-Semitism. Though admittedly we have no positive feeling as Jews, it would be beneath our dignity to deny our Jewishness while such labels and prejudices exist."

Or, in the interpretation of the existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre, who is not a Jew himself: *"Le Juif est un homme que les autres hommes tiennent pour Juif: voilà la verité simple d'où il faut partir."* ("The Jew is a man whom other men consider Jewish: that is the simple truth from which we must start.") Sartre, at least, follows through on his premise. American Jews who try to live by this same premise stop with this simple truth; and they wonder why the doctrine still leaves room for bewilderment and indecision.

The reason, of course, is that man cannot live by a negative philosophy. Jews who are Jews only because others call them Jews are ringed by a dilemma. They do not want to be Jews; they will not, on the other hand, stop being Jews. Since they assume no positive values, they condemn themselves to a Jewishness without content or satisfaction.

Finally, there is the racial definition. The Nazis claimed that Jews were a racial group, and a low-grade one at that. They rationalized their bloody program of extermination with theories of biological heredity ridiculed by every reputable scientist in the world. Revulsion against the Nazi race theory and its consequences has perhaps caused us to overlook the fact that there has been a Jewish race theory, too. This is the "chosen people" concept, which in its modern form differs from Nazi theory in that it stresses the religious and ethical rather than the biological, and claims superiority in spirit rather than in power.

These, then, are the five most common prevailing concepts: religion, nationality, culture, race, and a negative one for which a single word is hard to find. Not one of these can possibly apply to all Jews in America: the religious, unreligious, anti-religious; the nationalists and anti-nationalists; the rational Jews, the emotional Jews, the unthinking Jews; the lovers of Jewish culture and those who are oblivious to it; the Jews who think Gentiles make them Jews and those who like to be Jews.

Is there any need for a definition at all? I think there is, not for purposes of defense against anti-Semitism but for achievement of peace of mind as Jews. No individual feels secure unless he has some understanding of and pride in his roots as a person—his family, his home town, his childhood associations, his background. The search for roots can, like anything else, be carried to ridiculous and even dangerous extremes; but, in moderation, it is human and even necessary.

What we seek, therefore, is a definition that can be applied to most, if not all, Jews in America—that will correspond with the facts—that will permit the individual Jew to make as much or little of his background as he wishes, so that he may be proud of his Jewish heritage or simply take it for granted. Such a definition can hardly be found in current concepts. It can, I believe, be found in an understanding of the position of American Jews as one among the many ethnic groups which add up to the total population of the United States.

NO COUNTRY in Europe, west of the Soviet Union, can compare with the United States for the heterogeneity of its population. Wave after wave of immigrants came here expecting freedom, opportunity, safety, or, in the case of Negroes, slavery. This is how America grew. This is the very basis of our population pattern.

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By and large, the degree of integration (and of acceptance) into the overall American pattern has been in direct proportion to the length of time each group has been here. We have a dominant Anglo-Saxonism probably because the English and Scotch-Irish were among the earliest arrivals. The Dutch have long since been absorbed. The Germans who came in the early 19th century are by now almost completely integrated. Descendants of the early Irish, who had many difficulties at first, have passed beyond the immigrants' time of troubles. The later immigrants—Italians, Poles, Slovaks, for example—had to suffer the exaggerated tensions of an industrializing America; but they are gradually achieving greater acceptance and greater integration.

The process of acceptance is slow. But it does move. Seventy-five years ago it would have been inconceivable for an Irish Catholic to think seriously of running for the presidency. In 1928, Alfred E. Smith did try it, and he was nominated by one of our major parties. True, one reason for his defeat was the very fact that he was Irish and Catholic; but an Irish Catholic could probably become president of the United States in our generation. When Wendell Willkie ran in 1940, his German ancestry had nothing whatever to do with the election returns. And among the present Republican possibilities are listed Harold Stassen, of mixed Austrian and Scandinavian parentage, and, until his recent withdrawal, Dwight Eisenhower, of Swiss-German descent.

Just as acceptance increases with the passage of time, so does integration within the group. The third-generation Irish American is likely to be less anti-British than his grandfather or his father. The American-born Italian is not likely to read an Italian-language newspaper at all, or to take much more than an average interest in the political affairs of the old country.

This is Americanization in the normal, healthy sense. It is not a sharp, self-conscious amputation of the natural interests of people arriving in a new home and still thinking nostalgically of the old one; it is a gradual shifting of interest to the here and the now, almost imperceptible from day to day, but clearly evident from generation to generation.

The overwhelming majority of American Jews are descended from forebears who, in recent centuries at least, lived in a rather clearly defined area of Eastern and Central Europe—Poland, Russia, Hungary, Rumania, Lithuania, Austria, Eastern Germany, etc.

In most of these lands emancipation came late, and, in some, only superficially. Thus the European forebears of most American Jews had led ghetto lives, dwelling in an environment exclusively Jewish, following separate communal customs, observing Jewish religious practices, enjoying the Jewish variations on Central and East European cooking, engaging in what became popularly known as Jewish occupations, and looking on non-Jews as outsiders who were probably unfriendly. It is not necessary here to stress the fact that all this was forced on them. They led such lives, separate and Jewish.

These forebears of most American Jews were indeed an ethnic group, whether they came from Galicia or Lithuania or Bukovina; as an ethnic group, they came to America; and today their children and grandchildren are most easily comparable, as a group, to descendants of other ethnic groups.

The great wave of Jewish immigration lasted from the 1880's to the First World War. This means that the Jewish group, on the whole, is second generation now verging into third generation. By now most American Jews are decidedly different from what they were fifty years ago. They have been educated in the American schools and have lost many of the habits and values which meant so much to their parents. They do certain things, react in certain ways, less because of what conditions were like in Eastern Europe in 1890 and more because of what conditions are like in the United States in 1948. This is the process that social scientists call acculturation. I would call it a process of assimilation, if the word did not seem to give so many Jews the shudders.

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ASSIMILATION, in the minds of most American Jews, implies hypocritical flight from Jewishness, generally including conversion to Christianity, changing one's name, denying or at least hiding the fact that one is Jewish. And the Jews of Germany are recalled as the most shameful example of this kind of "assimilation," with the ironic recollection of what happened to them when Hitler achieved power.

I hold no brief for the pre-Hitler behavior of German Jews. Perhaps they did seek to escape affiliation with their Jewish past. But if the Hitler accession to power is to be the only test of the soundness of their adjustment, then all Germans and all non-assimilationist Jews who believed in democracy, personal freedom, peace, and justice also were wrong. For all were unable to stop Hitler or escape his violence. The catastrophe that befell German Jews was not the result of their assimilationism. It was the result of Hitlerism. This means that the lesson that Jews have to learn from the German experience is not so simple as the current Jewish nationalist cliché would have us believe.

The history, the culture, the mythology, the ideals of America and Germany are so different as to be almost beyond comparison. Gunnar Myrdal, studying the Negro problem in America, concluded that there was an American faith in democratic, libertarian, equalitarian principles, which was not always carried into American practice; and the conflict between faith and practice he called the "American dilemma." In Germany, for a few years under the Weimar Republic, an attempt was made to superimpose democratic, libertarian, equalitarian practices on the generations-old German faith in force and authoritarianism. This was the German dilemma; it was resolved by Hitler in 1933, to the satisfaction of too many Germans. The American dilemma has not been resolved, by any means, and it may never be resolved. But so far, in the struggle, the faith has shown itself strong, and the practice moves forward. So long as there is this real difference between Germany and America, it would be silly to measure the Jewish perspective in America by the Jewish failure in Germany.

THERE is, of course, anti-Semitism in America, and it complicates any Jewish effort to achieve personal peace. The very word is enough to awake echoes of the Eastern European pogroms that our grandfathers knew, or of gas chambers in Germany not so many months ago; and in this memory lies real danger. For it is easy to assume that things must follow the same course everywhere. On the evidence, they need not.

Overt, militant, virulent, organized anti-Semitism (Christian Front), inspired by and following European patterns, is the least widespread form of anti-Semitism in this country. And it is the least dangerous, precisely because it stems from European political patterns unacceptable to most Americans. On the other hand, the really prevalent and dangerous kind of anti-Semitism in America is hardly even understood at all, chiefly, I believe, because we try to evaluate it by European standards.

In all the recent discussion about the motion picture *Crossfire,* most people overlooked the fact that the picture portrayed not one but two types of anti-Semitism. One type motivated the villain to murder a man on the sole ground that his victim was Jewish. Such a motive might ring true in a German, or Polish, or Slovak atmosphere, where there exists a tradition of active Jew-baiting. The villain's anti-Semitism in *Crossfire* was essentially European, not American; and American audiences would not dream of identifying their own attitude toward Jews with his.

Further in the film, a Tennessee boy becomes a key figure in the plot. He is asked to take part in a scheme to trap the villain into giving himself away. The youthful, shy, rather inarticulate boy hesitates. After all, he asks, how is he to know that the persuasive police officer isn't himself a "Jewish person"?

I submit that, in a raw and uncut state, this is a closer approximation to the prev-

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alent native anti-Semitism. I make no claim to scientific analysis; but I saw the film in cross-sectional Washington, where the audience was not predominantly Jewish. The gasp (and the giggles) that followed the boy's naively sincere remark revealed, I think, the fact that he had put into words what some of these people were unconsciously feeling.

They were people who might suspect Jewish influence behind special pleading against anti-Semitism; who might listen appreciatively to an anti-Jewish joke, and retell it if they could remember the punch line; who might pass remarks about a funny Jewish name, or an accent; who might resent the too rapid advancement of a Jewish fellow-worker; who might flatter their own egos by choosing a "restricted" summer resort.

But they would not normally condone violence or murder, whether the motive was anti-Semitism or robbery. They would not go out of their way to be deliberately rude to Jews. They would not, in other words, fall within the European anti-Semitic tradition. This does not make them any less anti-Semitic. It makes them anti-Semitic in a different way—socially, not politically—and according to a pattern highly reminiscent of the temper which produced the "No Irish Need Apply" signs of the last century. There is more of a connection between anti-Semitism in America and the historic forms of other anti-immigrant prejudices and actions, than between American anti-Semitism and what the Nazis thought and did.

Anti-Semitism, as we know it in America, will in my opinion be reduced not only by the passage of time but also by the reduction of all prejudices and discriminations; we will not wipe it out so long as other groups in the population also suffer non-acceptance. On the other hand, it is too easy to assume that simply by combating prejudice and discrimination we are going to achieve Jewish peace of mind.

Anti-Semitism is one of the factors, and a heart-rendingly vital one, in Jewish discomfort. But it is not the only one. And the others cannot be dismissed by blaming the anti-Semites. These other factors have to do with the thoughts and emotions of Jews themselves. Our problem is not only acceptance by others, but also deeper understanding of our position in America and fuller integration with others.

SINCE the years of Hitlerism and war, it has not been uncommon to hear American Jews speak of their sense of not belonging; it is indeed so common that many other Americans have begun to accept the phrase for the fact.

Recently, the American Federation of Labor passed a resolution favoring partition of Palestine. Its argument was founded on the "2,000-year-long historic homelessness of the Jewish people." If it refers to American Jews, this is stupid and dangerous talk. Nothing will do more to make them homeless in fact than constant repetition of such a false and irresponsible slogan.

The fact is that, in spite of their uneasiness, American Jews are American in the full and best sense of the word. They like to live in America, and would not dream of giving up all that living here means in the way of prosperity, opportunity, freedom, and happiness—in spite of injustices, prejudices, inequalities, and discriminations. They may not have thought through the meaning of their emotional Zionism; they may not have learned how to cope with anti-Semitism; but, despite the temptation of many to flee mentally from America, what they really seek is contentment *in* America.

Any amateur psychologist knows that you cannot build peace of mind on fear. He also knows that the best way to begin the conquest of fear is to examine its source. In our case, the source is anti-Semitism, an anti-Semitism exacerbated by the worldwide Jew-consciousness stimulated by Hitler but nonetheless, in its most common manifestations, a blood relation to prejudices practiced against other ethnic groups at roughly similar stages of their life in America. When we recognize that fact, we begin to conquer our own fear.

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What does this mean in practice? It means that we must recognize that we have developed an inferiority complex from the fact that we are Jewish. Every normal human being has an inferiority complex about something in this neurotic day: he is cross-eyed, color-blind, poor, wealthy, uneducated, a long-haired intellectual, a Polish-American with an unpronounceable name, a hick, a bad athlete, sexually insecure, or bald—and if you touch the sore spot you will get a reaction of pain and embarrassment. In the case of Jews, the sore spot is often the very fact that they are Jews but don't know why. To recognize this is the first step toward therapy.

It means that those of us who are religious Jews should not be apologetic about their religion or its practices. I have even heard it proposed that Judaism be transformed into a proselytizing religion, in order to proclaim to the world its fine ethical message and also to reinforce the self-esteem of Jews themselves; and perhaps the idea is not so odd.

It means that we should avoid any tendency to assume that every non-Jew is automatically or even potentially the enemy of the Jew, to believe that Jews stand alone in an unfriendly world. Our allies in America are numerous and powerful. They include all people with normally decent ideas; people who are liberal in the American tradition, whether their politics be left-wing or right-wing; people who believe in fair play, condemn lynchings, and dislike being stampeded—the good people who are the majority of America. They are not all heroes, but they are people who permit matters to go so far and no further.

It means that we must seek the middle ground between aggressiveness and regressiveness—that, on the one hand, we must not want to see a Jew on the Supreme Court only because he is a Jew; and that, on the other hand, we must not try to prevent a Jew from holding high office for fear that people will point to "Jewish domination." By the same token, it means we must remember that when Herschel Johnson participated in the UN deliberations on Palestine he was representing 140 million American citizens and not merely five million American Jews.

It means, in sum, that as individuals we must accept the inevitable process of assimilation (or acculturation or integration or adjustment—whichever word offends our sensibilities less) not in its cowardly sense but in the healthy sense which sees no conflict between Jewishness and American-ness. This is a positive position, not a negative one. It accords us the right—and perhaps the duty—to recall our history, culture, faith, and trations as Jews, and to add them to the American amalgam.

To do all this requires a good deal more self-examination than is now going on among American Jews. Few of us can afford the luxury of the psychoanalyst—granting that this problem comes within his province. We must do the job on our own. The world as a whole is full of emotional conflict and intellectual confusion; and it is hardly likely that American Jews are going to achieve complete peace of mind ahead of anyone else. But, if they will only face American realities, recognizing that these realities are in no basic way incompatible with their hopes and aspirations, they can take the first steps toward eliminating some of the causes of an insecurity which seems many times more acute than that of their fellow humans in the atomic age.

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HAS RUSSIA SOLVED THE JEWISH PROBLEM?

An Inventory of the Postwar Situation

HARRY SCHWARTZ

OUTSIDE the United States, the Soviet Union has the largest number of Jews living in any one country today. What is the present status of the Jews in the USSR? To what extent do they enjoy freedom and equality in political, social, and economic life? How has the war affected their position in the Soviet family of nations? What is their future outlook?

At the outset, one must be reminded that the information available to help answer these questions is by no means as complete as the information we have on the situation of Jews, say, in England or Germany or even in Czechoslovakia at the western edge of the Soviet sphere of influence. Instead of deriving our information from free intercourse and communication with Soviet Jews, we must depend primarily upon the statements of the Soviet government and its officially approved Jewish spokesmen in the USSR, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. Only a relatively small number of Americans, Jews and non-Jews, have had a chance to study the matter at first hand in the Soviet Union.

IT MAY be simplest to begin with the official Soviet picture of the position of the Jews in the Soviet Union. According to this account, in no land is the lot of Israel as bright as in the USSR. Anti-Semitism is forbidden by a law which is now almost thirty years old, as well as by the general prohibition of religious or racial discrimination contained in the Soviet constitution. In every field of activity, Soviet Jews have been given free opportunity to exercise their talents so that they can contribute most fruitfully to the general progress of the USSR. Nowhere in the world, we are assured, does Jewish culture flourish so gloriously as in the Soviet Union with its Yiddish newspapers, books, and theaters.

Two and a half million Jews, roughly a quarter of all surviving today, live in the USSR (the Joint Distribution Committee estimates 1,800,000). With the remaining fraction of European Jewry reduced largely to a mass of haunted and despairing refugees, it is comforting to believe that in the powerful Soviet Union there thrives a vigorous seedbed of Israel to carry on its traditions and its contribution to humanity.

But how true is this rosy picture? Can we accept the assurances of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Moscow whose leaders are obviously handpicked by the Soviet government and whose Yiddish organ, *Einigkeit*, reads only like a translation of *Pravda*? Why is it that so little free communication exists between Jews in the USSR and those in other countries? Few

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THE obstacles to obtaining reliable information and the prevalence of ideological prejudices, make difficult any clear picture of postwar Jewish life in the Soviet Union. Has Russia "solved the Jewish problem," as is often claimed? Obviously no simple black and white answer is possible. HARRY SCHWARTZ, assistant professor of economics at Syracuse University, here attempts the difficult task of opening a path for the objective discussion of the present situation of Russian Jews. Professor Schwartz did the larger part of his graduate research on the subject of Soviet economics, and has served as an expert on the Soviet Union for the United States Government. During the war, he was with the USSR intelligence group of the Office of Strategic Services and the State Department. He has written widely for newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals, and is the author of two books: *Seasonal Farm Labor in the United States* (1945) and *Russia's Post-War Economy* (1947). Professor Schwartz was born in New York City in 1919, and earned his doctorate at Columbia University.

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American Jews, except those with records of fervent pro-Soviet orientation, are admitted to the USSR. How much credence can be given to their sweeping conclusions, such as their invariable report that there is no anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union?

This writer keenly remembers the conversations he had with Soviet Jews in Berlin, officers in the Red Army, during the summer of 1945. Their words revealed the same neuroses, the same fears of anti-Semitism, and the same concern over the future of their people as one can find analagously among Jews in the Western world. Certainly they did not fit into the stereotype of the Soviet Jew presented by Communist propaganda and starry-eyed American travelers.

If the Jewish problem is solved in the USSR, how account for the case of the Polish Jews, who, given the choice of staying in the USSR as Soviet citizens or returning to the new Poland, voted in great numbers to go to Poland, despite their painful history there, and the present grim prospect? Did the experiences of these Polish Jews teach them, perhaps, that the realities of Soviet Jewish life are other than depicted in the popular legend?

II

FACED with these contradictions, let us try to study the available evidence for light on the complex picture of the Jewish position in the Soviet Union.

When Hitler began his attack on the USSR, the Soviet Union had about five million Jews in a population of over 190 million persons. Three million of these were Soviet citizens of long standing, roughly two-thirds of whom lived in the Ukraine and Byelorussia. The other two million Jews in the USSR in June 1941 lived in the areas which had been annexed during the preceding two years: Eastern Poland, the Baltic republics, Bessarabia, and Northern Bukovina. In early 1941, four out of the five million Soviet Jews lived in territory that Hitler conquered in the early stages of the Soviet-German conflict.

The Jews within the pre-annexation boundaries of the USSR were fully integrated into Russian life. They had made sharp advances. The lifting of the old Czarist barriers against Jewish entry into particular occupations had permitted many to go into new fields suiting their abilities and to win high public recognition. In 1897, more than half of all Russian Jews were small businessmen and traders; about 30 per cent were handicraftsmen and artisans; only 4 per cent worked in industry, and little more than 2 per cent in agriculture. By early 1939, on the other hand, almost half of all employed Jews were white collar and professional workers; roughly a quarter worked in industry; about 20 per cent were handicraft workers and artisans; and almost 6 per cent were in agriculture.

Most striking was the extremely important role of Jews as professional and technical workers in the rapidly expanding Soviet economy. Although in 1939 Jews were less than 2 per cent of the entire population of the USSR, they included about 17 per cent of all Soviet physicians, and about 10 per cent of all engineers, architects, scientists, university teaching personnel, artists, and writers. Jews formed almost as high a percentage of Soviet nurses, grade-school and high-school teachers, and bookkeeping and accounting personnel. Jews accounted for 10 per cent of all college students in 1939.

In one sector of Soviet life, but that the most vital, there was apparent before the war a steady diminution of Jewish personnel. This was in the top political leadership of the Communist party, which at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution had included such important figures as Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, and others. In 1941 Lazar Kaganovich remained the one Jew in the Politburo, the pinnacle of Soviet policy-making.

But there seemed little reason to believe that anti-Semitism played any significant role in the elimination of Jews from political power. Jews and non-Jews were involved together on the losing side of the bitter intra-party struggles for power which rent the Communist party during the 20's and 30's.

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All such losers paid the penalty of their defeat.

In the areas annexed by the USSR in 1939 and 1940, the situation of Jews was much less favorable. Russian annexation was followed by a vigorous effort to root out all possible opposition and to socialize all industrial and commercial capital.

To the extent that Jews had played significant roles in these annexed areas as leaders and members of non-Communist parties, whether of the Left or Right, as businessmen, and as prominent figures in public life, they were directly and adversely affected by the reorganization. Imprisonment in slave labor camps and execution, as in the case of Erlich and Alter, Socialist leaders, were the fates of the most unfortunate. At the other extreme a small fraction of Jews who had been Communists earlier or who conveniently became such later may well have improved their status under the new order of things.

SURVEYING the situation of all Jews in the USSR before Hitler's attack, there seems little doubt that they had made substantial progress under the Soviet regime and enjoyed equal citizenship with other groups. The legal ban on anti-Semitism was enforced. From time to time individuals were punished by jail sentences to emphasize the government's opposition to anti-Semites, and its adherence to the general Soviet policy of equal treatment for all nationalities.

The fact that Jews had equal rights with all Soviet citizens meant also that they suffered the limitations imposed by Soviet totalitarianism. Before the war, the religious Jew had to face the same atheistic propaganda and bear the same burden imposed by government anti-religious policy as the religious Christian or the religious Mohammedan. Zionism was forbidden as strictly as Ukrainian or any other kind of nationalism, and Zionists were persecuted for their beliefs. As Dr. Julius Margolin, a Zionist leader who spent five years in Soviet labor camps after fleeing Poland, wrote on his arrival in Palestine, "an entire generation of Zionists has died in Soviet prisons, camps, and exile." Jews had to toe the line of political conformity or pay the same penalty as that exacted from Great Russian or Kazakh dissidents. Fundamentally, the Soviet Jew, like the Soviet Armenian, the Soviet Georgian, or the Soviet Osetian, had no individual rights which the state need respect. He was, in short, equal with all other subjects of the Soviet dictatorship, i.e. equally not a free citizen in the Western democratic sense.

These considerations help put the present position of Soviet Jews in the perspective of Soviet nationalities policy. Like many another Soviet nationality, the Jews made great progress in the thirty years since the Bolshevik Revolution, if we measure progress—as partially we must—by reference to rates of literacy, access to educational and economic advancement, and freedom from crude policies of Russification such as were followed at times by the Czarist regime.

But with respect to the Jews, as with other groups, we must appreciate that "cultural autonomy," "economic development," and similar minority group goals have a far different meaning in a totalitarian context than in a democratic setting. Where political liberty is dead, as in the USSR, cultural autonomy becomes little more than the right to sing the praises of the existing regime in Yiddish or Armenian as well as in Russian. Economic development, in the same environment, becomes the exploitation of local resources and minority group talents in the interests of the planned economy as a whole, even when—as not infrequently happens—the interests of State centralization and uniformity are contradictory to that of the particular interests of state centralization and uniform-group affected. Jewish traders were made destitute for years before they or their children were absorbed into the new Soviet economy. These facets of Soviet minority policy must be understood if the position of Jews and other minority groups in the Soviet Union today is to be evaluated correctly.

III

THAT virtually all the four million Jews inhabiting the Russian areas conquered

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by Hitler did not die seems in large part due to the Soviet regime's evacuation of Jews during the military withdrawal from the Western USSR. Whether there was a preferential evacuation of Jews, or whether Jews were evacuated only insofar as they were economically valuable, is not clear. Jacob Lestchinsky (*New Leader*, March 8, 1947) claims the latter.

Uzbekistan, Bashkiria, Saratov, and other Eastern districts of the Soviet Union were flooded with tens of thousands of Jewish refugees, as well as with large numbers of others, non-Jews, fleeing before Hitler. These Eastern provinces had already received the vast majority of the 350,000 Jews who had earlier fled Nazi-occupied Poland into Russia, and who had been shipped eastward, many to forced labor camps, as compulsory exiles. Life was incredibly hard in these areas of refuge, as we have learned from the accounts of survivors, but those who were evacuated had a far better chance to remain alive than those who did not get out. For among these refugees were the additional workers sorely needed to man the expanded industry and agriculture in the East during the war.

In the Soviet armed forces, Jews carried out their patriotic obligations creditably and honorably. It has been estimated that more than half a million Jews served in the Red Army. Jews held fourth place among all the nationalities in the USSR ranked according to number of military awards, a position higher than their number warranted.

With the defeat of Hitler, a certain percentage of Soviet Jews evacuated from the West returned there to help in the reconstruction of these devasted areas. Most of the Polish Jews who survived the war after working in the East left the Soviet Union altogether. (It seems likely that a majority of them—almost 200,000, according to G. J. Gliksman's estimate in the *American Jewish Year Book, 1947-1948*—died in Russia.) Tens of thousands of Jews formerly resident in the West, however, have undoubtedly remained in the Urals, Siberia, and Central Asia. Most of the industry evacuated eastward during 1941-42 is remaining there, and with it remain the Jewish and non-Jewish workers, engineers, and managerial personnel who operated these plants during the war. Soviet Jewry is now far more widely dispersed over the USSR than ever before, and the old Jewish concentrations of the West, while to some extent reconstituted, are in large measure gone.

IN THE postwar Soviet Union, Jews continue to play an outstanding role as technicians, intellectuals, and workers. Among Stalin Prize winners for 1947 are included, for example, the mathematical physicist Frenkel, the pianist Goldenweiser, the metallurgist Friedman, the biochemist Rubin, and the agronomist Rudnitsky. Academician Joffe, an oustanding physicist, is reportedly one of the leaders in current Soviet atomic research, and academician Lina Stern, world-famous physiologist, has received wide Soviet recognition. Writers like Ilya Ehrenburg and David Zaslavsky have become internationally known as journalistic defenders of the Soviet point of view. At least one member of the Council of Ministers, Ginsburg, seems to be Jewish, as does Alexander Gorkin, Secretary of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, who recently received the Order of Lenin as a reward for his services.

During the postwar period, too, Soviet Jews have more easily been able to support Judaism and to worship publicly and practice their religion than was the case before the war. Easing of the government opposition to organized religion, initiated most dramatically during the conflict, has continued. Soviet rabbis and Jewish congregations have a number of times declared their vigorous support of the Moscow regime, just as have priests and congregations of other religions. So long as organized Judaism in the USSR supports the government and remains an instrument for winning good will abroad, there will probably be no unfavorable treatment accorded it in comparison with other groups. Of course, this government policy is merely one of toleration, perhaps temporary and practical, and the traditional Communist po-

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sition on the validity of religious belief is unchanged.

It would appear, then, that the Jews of the Soviet Union are relatively fortunate. They are bearing the hardships and suffering of postwar Soviet life in common with their fellows, but they would seem to have every opportunity to contribute to their society up to the limits of their talents. They are, apparently, not generally refused admission to medical school, or denied jobs, or kept away from certain neighborhoods or certain vacation spots.

IV

But this picture has flaws, serious flaws. The fear and trepidation of the Jewish Red Army officers mentioned earlier in this essay are not imaginary. They are based on important facts, on aspects of Soviet life today which Communist propagandists prefer to ignore or minimize.

It must be borne in mind that viewed historically a policy of national and religious equality is very new in what is now the USSR. Under the Russian Czars and other pre-Soviet rulers of this territory, hatred for Jews and other minority groups was deep and widespread. From the very beginning of the Bolshevik regime, it is true, a determined effort was made to stamp out such prejudice by use of every means of education and propaganda available. But from what we know of the causes of anti-Semitism generally, and of the virulence of anti-Semitism in Czarist and revolutionary Russia specifically, it would be naive to assume that anti-Semitism could be wiped out in a quarter of a century of Soviet rule.

Many of the developments in the Soviet Union in those years could not have helped but keep alive and even strengthen anti-Semitic feelings: the important role played by Jews—as well, of course, by other groups—in a party and government that aroused the hatred of the great mass of the Russian population—the peasantry, only superficially re-educated under the Soviet regime; the rapid rise of Jews, once restrictions were lifted, to responsible positions in Soviet life, such as plant manager, engineer, doctor, government official; the heavy influx of Jews into such cities as Leningrad and Moscow, from which they had been banned under the Czar.

The war, shattering the careful control of entry and exit into the Soviet Union, permitted us to discover the wide extent of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. Lestchinsky has commented on the incredibly paltry numbers of Jews who survived the Nazis in the cities and towns of Nazi-occupied Russia, as compared with the number who managed to keep alive in the various countries of Western Europe: it is clear that a most important factor was the hostile attitude of the non-Jewish population, and in many cases their active participation in the killing of Jews.

Original anti-Semitic feelings had been fanned by Nazi propaganda and fears of reprisal. Richard Lauterbach has reported how the Nazis taunted the Ukrainians over the priority given Jews in evacuation, contrasting their "comfortable" life in distant Uzbekistan with the hardships of life under occupation. John Fischer has pointed out that Ukrainian anti-Semitism was stimulated by the inhabitants' fear they would have to return the property they had stolen from the Jews.

Whatever the weight one must give to the effects of Nazi propaganda, there was no question that the Ukrainian population showed itself violently anti-Semitic after the end of the war. This is the account of a Russian Jew who left Kharkov in March 1944, returned at the end of the year, and managed to make his way to Palestine in the middle of January, 1945:

"The Ukrainians received the returning Jews with open animosity. During the first weeks after the liberation of Kharkov no Jew ventured about alone in the streets at night. The position improved only after the intervention of the authorities, who reinforced the police patrols in the town. In many cases Jews were beaten in the market place, and once a Jew was actually killed by a Ukrainian. The peasants who were present during the attack in the marketplace began to quarrel with the police who were summoned to

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the spot. All of them, including the murderer, were arrested. In Kiev 16 Jews were killed in the course of a pogrom which took place after the murder of a Russian officer by a Christian woman who was believed to be a Jewess.

"The Jews returning to their homes received no more than a small proportion of their property. Ukrainians summoned to court for possession of Jewish property were aided by other Ukrainians who gave false evidence against the Jews. . . .

"The Ukrainian authorities are openly anti-Semitic. Applications by Jews are not treated properly. When the Commercial Academy moved from Kharkov to Kiev, several Jewish professors applied for permission to go there, but their applications were rejected. They addressed themselves to the chairman of the Ukrainian Soviet but received no response. The Jewish theater was not allowed to return to Kharkov, and broadcasts in Yiddish were not resumed. The official answer to all Jewish representations is that the anti-Semitism with which the population has been infected by the Germans can only be uprooted gradually." (From the *Bulletin* of the Joint Rescue Committee of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, March 1945.)

Anti-Semitism was not confined to the Western areas. We have the word of so reliable a reporter as Harrison Salisbury that anti-Semitism revealed itself openly in certain circles of the Moscow intelligentsia early in the war. He indicates that reports of special preference for Jews in the evacuation of Moscow when it was threatened by the oncoming Germans received wide currency in that city, and aroused substantial resentment. It required the drastic intervention of the powerful Shcherbatov, Politburo member in charge of all propaganda work, to stop the open manifestation of these anti-Semitic attitudes.

The report quoted above also comments on the increase in anti-Semitism in Kirghizia in Russian Turkestan following the admittance of Jewish refugees. This is an aspect of the situation that is generally overlooked. The resident population apparently resented these strangers who were crowded into a restricted living space and created further drains upon the limited quantities of food, clothing, and other necessities. Even under the best of circumstances, the sudden bringing together of large groups of persons of different cultures and languages is likely to be accompanied by widespread misunderstanding and animosity.

Perhaps most important of all, however, was the impact of German anti-Semitic propaganda among the millions in the Red Army who fought the Germans. In their effort to produce disaffection among Soviet troops, German psychological warfare specialists bombarded Soviet troops with leaflets, newspapers, pamphlets, and front-line loudspeaker broadcasts full of lurid anti-Semitic propaganda. That some of this had its effect, this writer, as well as others, observed personally in conversations with Soviet soldiers in Berlin and on the border between the American and Soviet zones of Germany.

Prisoners of war captured by the Nazis were particularly indoctrinated with anti-Semitic views, and undoubtedly this played some part in inducing several hundred thousand former Soviet troops to fight for the Nazis under General Vlasov and other renegade leaders. The freed prisoners of war have now returned to the Soviet Union and many of them swell the number of potentially active anti-Semites in the USSR.

THE upshot of these various factors, it seems to this writer, is a substantial increase in the volume and virulence of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. How has the Soviet government reacted to this situation?

First, it must be pointed out that official government policy remains the same as before the war. The legal status of Jews has not changed.

Second, to the extent that increased anti-Semitism during the war is a by-product of German and anti-Soviet propaganda, the government fully realizes that it is linked with attitudes dangerous to the Soviet regime itself. For example, the Crimean Tatars, punished for their treachery during the

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war by banishment to Siberia, were infamous before the struggle as particularly infected with hatred of Jews. The Kremlin's re-education and re-indoctrination program in the liberated areas, therefore, has concentrated upon stamping out anti-Semitism along with more general anti-Soviet attitudes. This has been apparent in some recent Soviet films, where Jews have been portrayed in a favorable light, and their cooperation with non-Jews has been a leading theme.

One hint that the effort to stamp out anti-Jewish feeling in the Ukraine has not been too successful, however, is the recent announcement that more than 1,000 Jews had been moved from Vinnitsa province in the Ukraine to Birobidzhan. In the present situation, with a tremendous labor shortage for Ukrainian reconstruction, it seems unlikely that the government would have moved these people eastward unless their presence caused serious difficulties of some sort.

Outside the liberated areas, however, the Soviet government seems to have taken a far less vigorous attitude toward the recrudescence of anti-Semitism. Some reports indicate that in the Eastern USSR anti-Semitic statements have been made in the presence of policemen or other officials without any punitive action having been taken. Such reports must be evaluated cautiously, but it seems likely that in the atmosphere of great postwar strain and sacrifice, the Kremlin would prefer not to add another irritant to the situation by actively combating anti-Semitism in areas where it was not directly related to anti-Soviet sentiment, as it so often is in the Ukraine. (A number of trustworthy reporters have noted a similar Communist policy of caution and appeasement in Soviet-dominated countries like Poland, Rumania, and Hungary.)

IN JUDGING the Soviet government's attitude toward Jews, one must also try to evaluate the rather impressive evidence of the continued decline of Jewish influence in the top circles of the Communist party, together with the fact that among the rising stars in Soviet political life there appear to be no Jews in the first rank, though members of other nationalities besides the Great Russian are apparent.

Is this because of a deliberate policy of exclusion of Jews from the first-rank positions, or because of the different conditions under which the present adult population of the USSR was raised? For the last thirty years, it must be remembered, preferment in the Communist party and the Soviet government has been sought by all in the USSR, while before the Revolution, Jews, as members of a dissatisfied minority, played a role in the revolutionary movement far disproportionate to their importance in the population as a whole. It was only to be expected that Jewish influence in the leadership would wane. But even this does not adequately explain the almost complete absence of Jews from the current Soviet political limelight, when we consider the continuing importance of Jews in the Soviet intelligentsia generally.

A related phenomenon is the almost complete displacement of Jews as official representatives abroad. There are no Jews at present among either Soviet ambassadors to key countries or among the chief Soviet representatives in the UN and other international groups. The removal of Maxim Litvinov as Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs and of Ivan Maisky as Ambassador to Great Britain has been widely noted, but it has not been equally appreciated that their successors and the chief figures in the spotlight of Soviet diplomacy today include no Jews. Jews sent abroad in recent years as Soviet representatives appear to be mainly technical advisers or to hold unimportant positions.

Corroborative testimony on this point is given by reports of several American correspondents in Moscow that Jews are no longer accepted for diplomatic training in the Soviet Union. Harrison Salisbury, for example, notes that while he was in Moscow three vice-commissars in the foreign office were Jewish, but that he could not identify any of the junior attachés as Jews. He got the definite impression "Nordic" blondes were

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receiving preference in the diplomatic field.

If, as seems likely, the Soviet government has deliberately decided to exclude Jews from among its chief representatives abroad, several factors are probably behind this decision.

First, there is the tremendous surge of Great Russian nationalism within the Soviet Union itself, a surge evidenced in the Soviet press by the constant harping upon the special role of the Great Russians in the supposedly equal Soviet family of nations. Second, there may be the "practical" consideration that anti-Semitism abroad might handicap any Jew representing the USSR. Finally, it is not unlikely that the Soviet government tends to associate Jews with an international outlook. In this period of Soviet isolationism and intransigeance, Jews, members of a people having many ties to the West, not to speak of relatives in the various countries, may be felt to be unsuitable representatives of the postwar Soviet Union.

WHAT may be further relevant evidence concerning the problem of the Soviet government's attitude toward Jews, is the evident underplaying of the Jewish role in the USSR. In *Pravda* and *Izvestia* this writer has noticed that where Jews are honored for achievements of one sort or another, it is rare to find their Jewish nationality mentioned. Where a member of some other major minority group—Lett, Armenian, Uzbek, Ukrainian, etc.—is mentioned, this fact is often given prominence as testimony to the success of the overall nationalities policy. Perhaps the Soviet government, as a deliberate policy, does not wish to inform the bulk of its people of the true magnitude of the creative contribution being made by Jews today in all spheres of Soviet life, because it may increase popular resentment or for some other reason. But this seems hard to reconcile with the not infrequent mention of the Jewish autonomous region in the Far East (Birobidzhan) as fulfilling particular economic tasks.

An important final piece of evidence, on the more positive side of the scale, is the appointment last spring of Lazar Kaganovich as the new boss of the Ukraine, the area particularly noted for its anti-Jewish feeling. Not only was Kaganovich's appointment in the nature of a defiance to anti-Semites, but it also exemplified Kremlin adherence to the policy of sending its most competent men to do a vital job. Kaganovich has for years been the Politburo's ace trouble shooter.*

Except for increased barriers to minimize direct contact of Jews with the Western world, there is no reason to predict that for the foreseeable future official Soviet policy toward Jews is likely to be changed. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the ambitious economic and political goals set by Stalin for the postwar period cannot be achieved except by mobilization of all resources available to the USSR. Any deviation from the present nationalities policy internally would require diversion of resources from economic reconstruction to the economically wasteful objective of persecution or discrimination. In the case of Jews particularly, any change of pol-

*One of the first discussions of Soviet anti-Semitism recently appeared in the December 29 issue of *Newsweek*. Part of the report, by Edward Weintal, diplomatic correspondent, follows:

"Solomon Mikhoels and Itzik Feffer, president and vice president respectively of the Soviet Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee [it is reported] called on Foreign Minister Molotov last month . . . to draw the foreign minister's attention to the growth of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. The Jewish delegation is also reported to have seen Politburo member Lazar Kaganovich, a Jew. Both Soviet officials promised that the government would take remedial action as soon as 'conditions are more propitious.'

"The specific complaint of the Jewish representative dealt with an unpublicized but nevertheless effective anti-Jewish policy which was first adopted by the Soviet Government at the time of the Soviet-Nazi 1939 pact . . . and has now been revived as a corollary to the Soviet anti-Western campaign. Under this policy Jews are to be eliminated from the armed services, from positions of influence on the masses, and from any activities which would bring them in touch with foreigners.

"The number of Jews in the Foreign Office has already been reduced to a minimum. . . . Jews have been barred from the diplomatic and language schools and from military academies. Jews holding positions of chairman of party or government committees have now been replaced. Most recently they have also been barred from dramatic schools. . . ."

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icy now would be particularly expensive, for even after the slaughter of millions of Jews, they form an important portion of the USSR's scarce supply of skilled and technical trained personnel.

FROM a long-range point of view it would seem that, despite the aggravated popular anti-Semitism, the recent war has done much to speed the process of Jewish assimilation in the Soviet Union, already well advanced before the war. The ancient Jewish centers of Western Russia have been broken up. In the smaller Jewish communities of Western Russia, the inevitable disparities between numbers of men and women must encourage intermarriage, and the spreading of fairly isolated groups of Jews in the Central and Eastern parts of the Soviet Union must have the same result. Even before the war a significant number of persons born in Jewish households no longer regarded themselves as Jews and registered as members of other nationality groups: this tendency will be increased by the breaking up of large Jewish concentrations.

As for Jewish (i.e., Yiddish) culture, we have already referred to the undistinguished character of its contents. There is one Yiddish newspaper, appearing three times weekly, mostly filled with general news and exhortations to greater productivity. There are a few Yiddish theatrical companies and a school of dramatics in Moscow; like non-Yiddish theatrical companies, in response to official pressure in the "cultural" area, they have shifted from an emphasis on Yiddish and other classics, to plays on modern Soviet reality. A number of Yiddish books are published, mostly dealing with the war. The Yiddish school system that flourished in the 20's is now highly attenuated; there is very little information about it.

As B. Z. Goldberg, a consistent friend of the Soviet Union, wrote in the *Day*, August 14, 1946, after a six month trip: "There are no Jewish districts in the cities and towns, there are no specifically Jewish occupations, there are no Jewish hospitals, no Jewish old folks homes, no Jewish clubs, no Jewish parties, no Jewish philanthropies, no Jewish educational institutions. . . ."

IF THE above analysis is correct, the present picture of Soviet Jewry is one compounded of lights and shadows rather than of bright spots alone, as painted by a Corliss Lamont or Itzik Feffer. In some respects, actually, there is a great resemblance between the current American and Soviet frameworks of Jewish life, since in both official quality and great opportunity for personal advancement exist in a setting marked by substantial if mainly latent hostility by part of the population.

But any picture of the situation of Jews in Russia must include the fact that they, like other citizens of the Soviet Union, live their lives in a society characterized not only by a low and decreasing standard of living, wretched housing, poor medical care, and severe production pressures, but by the absence of those general freedoms and civil liberties enjoyed in a Western democracy—the right to free speech, discussion, publication, assemblage, free group association and organization, protection from search and seizure, etc.—as well as such intangible privileges as the right to be different. These human gains represent the aspirations of Jews no less than of other peoples during the past two centuries, and for good and sufficient reasons which have to do with both their heritage and their previous disabilities, Jews have been in the forefront of the struggle for their achievement.

It is difficult to believe that they can consider their life satisfactory in an atmosphere where these are denied, not to speak of their fraternal desire to communicate freely with fellow Jews elsewhere in the world and maintain religious and cultural ties and relations of mutual aid. Constitutional equality and legal ordinances against anti-Semitism and economic discrimination are certainly important; but it is hard to regard the problem of the Jew, either as a human being or as a Jew, as solved in a country where stringent cultural uniformity and an all-pervasive dictatorial regime leave him free to be neither.

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NEWSPAPERS

A Story

ZALMAN SHNEOUR

ONCE, in the "good old time"—oh, about thirty years ago—Shklov was not aware of newspapers. The lone copy of *Hamelitz* that came to the apothecary was the only source of news. Half-willingly, half-unwillingly, the Jews of Shklov used to drink at this suspect spring. (When a man lacks an *ethrog*, he blesses with a potato.)

As they went through so many Jewish hands and mouths, those news items in *Hamelitz* acquired a distinct Jewish complexion. When the Prince of Wales arrived in Marienbad, Shklov somehow comprehended that, beyond any doubt, the Prince was in Marienbad because he had really lusted for a piece of that gefillte fish for which the kosher restaurants in Marienbad were famous. When Tolstoy began to strike up an acquaintance with our Talmudic lore, Shklov immediately learned that the Count was at such and such a place in the treatise "Benedictions" and, if not today, he would be converted tomorrow. When Rothschild floated a loan to the Turk, Shklov understood that he was buying Palestine.

All maps and all politics were, to the least detail, reckoned by hand among the statesmen of Shklov. Each finger was a realm, every crease—a river and fort. From the afternoon till the evening prayer, the tangled gray beards hung, engrossed, over the spokesman's hand—searching, by the faint light of the window, for the frontiers of kingdoms, the destiny of nations. In the full fever of debate, a hand slammed down on the table; and the *hazan's* voice welled up and melted with odd sadness on the air, as the first star appeared in the cloudy sky, and the first lamp was lit in the shabby Lithuanian *beth ha-midrash*.

He is m-erciful. He f-orgi-ives iniquity. He does no-ot destroy. . . .

The empires vanished like smoke, the fish of the Prince of Wales lost all their Jewish flavor, Rothschild's millions lost their value; and the impassioned statesmen, lonely and troubled, followed the voice of the *hazan* in the half-darkness.

God saves. The Ki-ing will answer the da-ay we call. . . .

THERE appeared in this out-of-the-way town a one-armed hero, a former cobbler, who had given up his craft when he lost his left hand. He stretched out his sound right arm—it crashed through a window that opened on Europe, and a cascade of papers swept down into the town.

A newspaper—once private property—was public property now. An item of news was no longer a delicacy. The shrunken fingers and hands of the old synagogue statesmen lost all geographic worth; they could not stand the competition of the maps

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ZALMAN SHNEOUR is one of the most highly regarded and productive of Jewish writers, author of forty-one volumes in Yiddish and twenty-one in Hebrew. Born in Shklov, Byelorussia, in 1887, he left home at the age of thirteen and went to Odessa, where he was encouraged as a literary child prodigy by the leading figures of modern Hebrew literature. From there he went to Warsaw, where for a few years he was private secretary to the writer I L. Peretz. Between 1906 and 1940, Mr. Shneour lived in Switzerland, France, Germany, and Denmark. He came to the United States in 1940. In this country he has contributed widely to Yiddish periodicals and newspapers. "Newspapers" is taken from *The Jews of Shklov*, a volume of stories published in 1929. It has been translated from the Yiddish by Nathan Halper. *Hamelitz*, referred to in the first paragraph, was a famous Hebrew periodical of the 19th century.

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that were printed in the papers along with every significant political event. Yet, if reading a Jewish paper became a necessity to Shklov, reading a Russian paper remained a luxury still, a mark of intellectuality, a lofty matter—like a conversation in the street with the prefect of police. One might, if one willed, hold it and read it upside down—that was not important.

Now that there had come into being a Russian pennysheet, this luxury was not expensive. Uncle Yuri could also indulge in this delight (praise the Lord!), not only because it was the fashion but that—once a fortnight—he might share the news that men wrote with Aunt Feige. He, for one, was not ignorant of how a Russian paper should be handled; hadn't he spent six months in Moscow, until they expelled him?

But before we sit down with Uncle Yuri to read a newspaper, you must first meet the newspaper-vendor himself.

THERE lived in Shklov a cobbler whose name was Mutte, a simple fellow. Once he pricked his left hand with an awl that was rusty. The hand became swollen. He carried it around, from doctor to doctor, till—God help us!—they had to amputate it. This fellow, Mutte, came home from the district hospital early one morning minus a hand, and sat, speechless, near his dust-covered workbench. His eyes stark, he stared the whole day through at the old lasts. Thread, awl, hammer, and nails were all there. Jewish soles have plenty of holes.... But the working hand no longer was there. All that was left to do was to go on the dole or go begging from door to door.

Yet, God devises the balm before he inflicts a wound; before Mutte ever had any trouble with his hand the newspaper was created. Broad torrents of paper had, for some years, been bearing down from key cities upon town and hamlet. The printed black words settled like locusts, disseminating everywhere the echoes of world scandal, the hustle of cities, the nervous din of the new day.

Everywhere but in Shklov, that is. The torrent recoiled before its traditions, its wooden houses, and muddy streets.

Thus it was till Mutte-of-the-Severed-Hand arose from his forsaken oilcloth-covered cobbler's bench and steered the paper flood into the town.

One fair day, Mutte suddenly appeared—drab, uncombed little beard, bluish, gullible eyes—lugging under his half-arm some kind of rectangular bundle. The bundle was held together by his Hasidic red nose-rag. People wondered, what could such a one as Mutte be carrying?

Humbly as a beggar, he went into each house asking that they buy a paper from him—a Russian one, a Jewish. The paper suited Mutte as a sword suits a *melamed.* But what can one do with a neighbor—a Jew—who has only one hand? They took the paper and gave him the penny. The paper floated before their eyes once, twice—until they took it upon themselves to look into it.

In this way, little by little, the good citizens got accustomed to reading the printed pages. If Mutte did not show up one day, they really missed him. Then when they saw him again, they took him to task: "Mutte! Where did you disappear to yesterday? We were just at the point where the virgin was being seduced in the Sultan's harem. . . . "

His reputation grew from day to day. His sponging was transformed into a mission that answered the deep, inner needs of the town. His shabby, ancient fur coat was replaced by a brand-new overcoat with a collar of velvet.

No longer did he carry the newspapers like smuggled goods, in a nose-rag. Openly and proudly, Mutte distributed his journals. Expansively, like a marriage-broker, he strode into the best houses. Out in the streets, he'd cry: "Folks! Buy a *Friend!* Have a *Friend* in your house! A *Slice of Life—a Severke!*" (This last was his own abbreviation for *Sev-Zop-Kry* or Northwest Region). On occasion, Mutte himself gave a quick glance over the black little printed specks.

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OH, HE was a heroic figure! The dear Lord knows where Mutte dug up some student's white summer tunic, with metal buttons turned black; or where he got hold of the narrow trousers of a fop, and a cap, with scarlet visor, of some civil employee in an undecipherable bureau. This, in Mutte's eyes, was the uniform proper to a Jewish newspaper vendor. It took no time for the town to ratify this mongrel rig. If that was the way a paper vendor was dressed, it was presumably the way he was supposed to dress.

Five o'clock, after the mails, housewives would wait at their windows. Wasn't that Mutte, newspapers folded under the stump of his arm?—they hurried to meet him, the lower classes to buy Jewish papers for cash, the best people to buy Russian papers on credit.

At Uncle Yuri's house, Aunt Feige took her penny gazette and lay it on the chest of drawers. The Russian papers piled up there; for weeks at a stretch, no one gave them a second thought. Aunt Feige was quite content to hear the more important tidings from the vendor.

"*Nu,* Reb Mutte? What's the latest?"

Mutte had grown used to sparing his steady customers the chore of having to "read Gentile." Before he delivered the paper, he had skimmed the cream of the news which he ladled out to the householders:

"In Warsaw, *govrit un,* they butchered a mother and three daughters. In the morning, *govrit un,* they were found—dead."

Since he began to sell his papers, some two dozen Russian words had sunk into Mutte's skull. He made use of them when they were appropriate and when they were not. When he said, "*govrit un,*" he was trying to pronounce "*guvurit un,*" "he says," with an authentic Gentile snap. Who the "he" was, who it was that "says"—this was never clearly understood. Nonetheless, Aunt Feige was certain that to report what was in a newspaper, you had to talk in this way.

"Oi! A calamity!"

Aunt Feige shook her head and laid two fingers to her cheek.

"And in Riga"—Mutte added to the horrendous news by executing a little flourish with the hilt of his arm—"Nineteen Ow-goost—In Riga—they, *govrit un,* will go out. The Shocialists will do it. Red flagons will be raised. *Yezhli* [if] *govrit un,* they go out, then they will make ashes and smoke of 'em!"

"Then they shouldn't creep where they oughtn't to." Aunt Feige was not concerned. "But aren't there any wars heard from?"

"China riots! The repooblic is attacking. *Yezhli, govrit un,* they meet, the blood will be running in the streets—"

"Where?" Aunt Feige was terrified.

"China," he answered, and winked in the direction of China.

"What a world!" She took the fingers from her cheek. "What has come over China?" She was completely baffled, but was nonetheless prepared to observe to the end the rite of paper-and-news.

Mutte went on with his solemn obligation of providing useful information.

"Julee twelve, *govrit un,* they did banish twenty Jews 'Second Guild-ers,' from Moscow. *Yezhli, govrit un,* they return. . . ."

At a loss for words, he wigwagged his crippled arm. Aunt Feige, however, could figure out for herself how the fur would fly if these merchants of the Second Guild dared to return to Moscow.

"Oi-oi-oi," she sighed heavily, half from distress, half as a matter of form.

His news flashes finished, Mutte tipped his cap (the one with the badge from an undistinguishable bureau). "*Duh svidonyeh,* (see you again)", he said, kissed the *mezuza*—and left. Presently, that high confident little voice would be heard next door: "So, *govrit un, yezhli . . . govrit un . . . .*" And the recitation began again at the very beginning.

The penny gazettes accumulated on the commode and provided the paper that was needed for the routine tasks of the household, and on Friday night, they plugged up the jugs of boiling water. Even so, there were more than enough. Aunt Feige, in an irritable moment, would notice the stack of

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papers that served no good purpose and cluttered up her house and she would scream at the children:

"Idlers! Scarecrows! First they nag me, 'Buy a paper! Mamma, buy a paper!' You might think that they intended to read it! They don't even begin! Only that I should throw away a little money. . . . *Nah!* Let me hear tomorrow that I should buy newspapers!"

On the morrow Mutte came with a package of fresh-smelling newspapers. *"Zdrostvo!"* he announced and he started to tell her the latest news. From Samara, from Berlin, from the Duma, from Japan—*"Yezhli, govrit un,"* and "It is positeeve—*govrit un!*" Aunt Feige's wrath drifted away like smoke, and on the chest of drawers—newly baked—another newspaper was added to the pile.

In the huge metropolis, in the deep of the night, the linotypes clicked; presses beat; the pouring lead seethed in the matrices; the monstrous rollers turned; and by the bulb's red shine stood workingmen and workingwomen—smeared with lead dust and sweat, eyes heavy and bloodshot. All this so that Uncle Yuri might have a paper lying on the commode every day, a paper for his crosseyes to belittle from afar. On occasion he touched the pile and muttered to himself, "Ought to read it"—and then turned to the Talmud or some Cabalistic tome.

But, one glorious day Uncle Yuri awoke from his afternoon nap armed with that particular high mood required for reading a Russian newspaper. A cheek and half of his beard were ironed and steamed—the other half seemed to stand on an end. It was obvious on which side he had dozed. He rinsed his mouth and made obstinate movements with his head as if to say, "No! No!" Then, in a refreshed voice he called:

"Feige! Wife! Prepare me the samovar!"

The samovar was prepared. As he waited for it to boil, Uncle Yuri reclined on the sofa by the window.

"Feige! Wife! Fetch me, maybe a newspaper."

Aunt Feige went to the commode, ready to assist her husband in this sudden spiritual enterprise. The children's schoolbooks and notebooks lay scrambled all over the papers. With two fingers, she reached down into the heap and extracted the copy that was to be read. No matter the day! No matter the month!

"Nah!" She brought him the paper. "At last, he has decided he will read."

"I see that you have a lot of time," Uncle Yuri retorted in a tone that led one to believe *his* every last second was occupied. With this, he saddled the spectacles on his nose, which jutted out—curiously tense and ceremonial. His converging pupils, beneath the old-fashioned lenses, became deep and immense and frightening to look at.

Uncle opened by reading the newspaper's name, and then he buried himself in its subscription rates: what did it cost a year? A half-year? A month?

"Feige," he cried to his wife in the kitchen, "What do you pay for this paper? A kopeck a day? Is that so? Look! For three rubles you can subscribe for a whole year! What kind of a bargain are we getting? I tell you—better subscribe! Why, our Jomme, he gets his every day from Petersburg, with a printed address. 'Mister,' it says. High-class!"

"So go ahead and subscribe," her voice answered from the kitchen.

"If God will give me health, I will write out my subscription for it to come here direct from Petersburg."

This pledge taken, he dug in for the real job at hand. When Uncle Yuri read, he read only the fatly printed headlines. As for the little Russian symbols lying peppered and freckled—like so many black poppyseeds—underneath each headline . . . he was afraid to start up with them. Yearly, at the Nizhni Fair, Uncle Yuri gazed on a goodly number of placards that hung over the booths. The headlines above the articles now reminded him of those big signs at the Nizhni Exposition. There: SKINS, FISH, SEWING MACHINES, SUGAR. Here: MURDERED BODIES, SCANDALS, BOMBS, WARS. What the headlines did

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not tell, he could conjure up for himself.

Syllable by syllable, Uncle Yuri read the heading of the editorial. (Holy writ is read twice; you explain it once. He, on the other hand, read a headline once and explained it twice.)

"MI-N'YEH-HU-TIM GU-LUDAH-AT–GULUDAHT! Meaning–we do not want to starve! You hear, Feige?" he called to our Aunt in the kitchen.

"I hear!" she answered, coming up to the door of the dining room.

"We do not want to starve!" he announced grimly, his eyes fearfully exaggerated by his antiquated glasses. "An end to it! Too long have we been tormented! Well written–the way it ought to be!"

Uncle Yuri read out a second headline.

"BUM-BUM-Ba, OO, OO-V NIZH-NEM NUV-NUV-GURUDDE! In Nizhni –a bomb! You hear, Feige? They throw bombs again in Nizhni! Who will suffer? Jews at the fair, no doubt. The good Lord have mercy!"

"Oi-oi-oi," Aunt Feige's little three-keyed sigh, from the kitchen, made reply.

"B-BOON-TI OO-V TO-KIO. *N'nah!* Riots again! You hear, Feige? *Big* riots in Tokyo! They kill, they slaughter–it's chaos. God knows what the end will be. *Nah!*"

She had heard the news from Tokyo a long while before, from the lips of Mutte, but she listened again. In her heart, she was pleased that her old man–not to complain–knew his way around the Russian letters. He could be relied on.

Uncle Yuri buried himself more deeply in his Russian newspaper:

"ROS-ROS-P . . . R . . . ROS-PRI OO SU-YOOZ-NI-KOV! In the *Suyooznikov* Party, there is . . . is . . . You hear, Feige?"

"What is in the *Suyooznikov* Party?"

"Ros-*pri* . . . . A plague on them! What's this they have scribbled? A *nasty* word . . . . Where is our Talmud-boy? Doing his homework? No? Let's ask *him*. What is this *ros-pri*? Let us find out what *he* knows."

A minute later, she returned with her report. "He does not know! Searched, looked, *beh, meh,* and–he does not know!"

Uncle Yuri, with a judicious little air, pulled at his beard and spoke in this fashion:

"So-o? He doesn't know either? Why does he study? Don't we pay his teacher three rubles each month–don't we? Money thrown away!"

"A waste of money!" Aunt Feige made it unanimous. Uncle Yuri tried to drive away the bad taste of that item. He attacked the next headline:

"BOL-BOL-SHOI SCON-DOL OO-V OO-V DUMA! *Nah,* you hear, Feige? A scandal again in the Duma! If they call it *'Bolshoi Scondol,'* it is, probably, a real one. No little matter. Jew-haters are raising hell again. He is doing it, no doubt. That Purishkevitch, may his name and may its memory be erased! Help! Why is that *goy* after us?"

AUNT FEIGE brought the samovar and brewed the tea. He moved on to the advertisements, which he continued to share with his wife.

"You hear, Feige? They are advertising for housemaids! Such treasures! You have to hunt for them even.

"You hear, Feige? Here are doctors begging, we should let them cure us. *Nah!* And our specimen of a barber leech grumbles when he gets a guilder. *Twenty kopecks* give him. . . . A question of dignity. . . . *Nah!* Our Jomme's girl wants to leave town and study to be a dentist. She'll be happy like a gray cat. Yeh, yet! Look at this–dentists are plentiful as dogs. *Nah, nah.* Boarding schools. Theaters. Face poo-der."

All of a sudden Uncle Yuri's eye was caught by a printed shoe, with a large slogan, *Samaya Luchaya Uboov* ["Very Best Footwear"]. He clamored to our Aunt:

"Feige, Feige. What did you pay for the children's shoes? Four rubles a pair? Such a bargain–a fantastic bargain! *Nah,* here is a pair for three roubles. An economical housewife you are when you have money!"

"What are you bothering me about?" Aunt Feige declared angrily. "His reading has carried him away! You wanted tea? Drink tea better! Enough of your reading!"

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Whereupon, Uncle Yuri vehemently cast away his newspaper.

"*N'nah*. No use talking to you. Better pour me a glass of tea."

AUNT FEIGE poured Uncle Yuri a glass of excellent tea. She opened the raspberry jam to soothe his nerves. The copy that he read she put back on the commode.

Day after day, more papers were added. More—to be used for the jugs on Friday night. And (who knows?) in perhaps a fortnight, Uncle Yuri—once again—would sit down to read the newspaper. Aunt Feige, with her fingers might then fish up the very paper that he had just read and had already forgotten.

Uncle Yuri would read each of the headlines in turns, beginning with the editorial, "We do not want to starve!" He would go on, on to the *real* scandal in the Duma. He would inform our Aunt Feige of what is what, till, somewhere in the ads, he popped upon that shoe.

There—he would pause. Then, somewhat puzzled, somewhat discontented, he would hurl the paper to the ground:

"*N'nah*. Lord! The same old stuff everyday! Nothing new to be heard! Nothing new to be seen! Feige, better pour me a glass of tea!"

If the Russian writers, the compositors, the printers, could have realized how devotedly Uncle Yuri studied their newspaper—with how much more assiduity, with how much more zest, would they have performed their heavy labors in the fog-ridden, sleepless St. Petersburg nights!

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EXISTENTIALISM AND FATHER ABRAHAM

A Colloquy with Kierkegaard on the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley

JOSEPH H. GUMBINER

ONE of the more agreeable novelties of these dreary times is the series of interfaith meetings that go on in every American city, reaching their climax during Brotherhood Week. Agreeable in their intentions, that is, for the sad fact must be recorded that they are generally flaccid in form and vacuous in content. Why is this so? Is it because of the unpalatable (to some palates, anyway) truth that actually the areas of disagreement between Judaism and Christianity are infinitely greater than the constantly asserted areas of agreement? When you disagree on so much and agree on so little, and your comments must be made in accents of perfect harmony and brotherly cooperation, on such occasions conversation must inevitably seem a lost art.

I discovered this for myself while traveling on my favorite train: the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley. The Yazoo and Mississippi is an Existentialist railway. That it exists in anxiety is proclaimed by long, throaty blasts sounded on the whistle as it jolts along towards each crossing. It makes the traveler conscious of the temporality of life by its habitual violation of the timetable. The round, honest face of its black engine reminds us of the time when machinery, before its refinement in the atomic warhead, was amenable to human purpose. The Yazoo and Mississippi Valley evokes the romantic nostalgia of contemporary men who long for a past time when the individual existed and counted for something.

IT WAS on such a train, happily bouncing along the Confederate roadbed through the South, that I read my first Existentialist book: *Fear and Trembling*, by Soren Kierkegaard. Since this volume by the eminent father of modern religious Existentialism was written in the form of a commentary on our *akeda* story of Genesis, chapter 22, I anticipated finding a great deal of homiletical material within its pages. When I had finished reading Kierkegaard's *drosh*, when I had begun to realize what the Existentialist thinker had made of our father Abraham, I knew that brotherhood meetings would never regain their former innocence for me. I knew that on all such occasions I would be sorely tempted to rise out of turn, and say: "I am a descendant of the much maligned Pharisees. I too exist. I too am anxious. But I want to speak, not about our little areas of agreement, but about the deep chasm separating the Christian heresy from the pure ethical religion of Judaism."

Of course, people who speak that way

ONE of the great religious influences of the 20th century has been the rediscovery of the writings of Soren Kierkegaard. He has had a profound influence on such men as Karl Jaspers, Paul Tillich, and Reinhold Niebuhr, and he constitutes one of the primary sources of contemporary "crisis theology," which emphasizes man's insignificance and disabilities as contrasted with God's all-powerful grace. Although "crisis theology" has been predominantly Protestant in its orientation, it has affected—to one extent or another—such diverse religious philosophers as the Catholic Étienne Gilson and the Jew Martin Buber. Generally speaking, however, Judaism has kept itself apart from this trend. In this article, JOSEPH H. GUMBINER attempts to define what he considers to be the basic Jewish attitude toward the beliefs of "crisis theology" as represented in Kierkegaard's thought. Rabbi Gumbiner has been director of the Hillel Foundation at the University of Arizona for the past six years, and is also currently acting as the first rabbi of the new liberal congregation Beth Hillel in the San Fernando Valley. He was born in Pittsfield, Illinois, in 1906 and attended the University of Cincinnati and Hebrew Union College.

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are not invited to interfaith gatherings in the first place.

In January of 1947, Will Herberg asked, in an article in COMMENTARY, for a reconstruction of Jewish theology. I am not the man to give it to him, and, what is worse, I don't know who can. But I share his insistence that this is the greatest intellectual need of our time and place: a reconstruction of Jewish theology, in literate English style, not written for Sunday school, but illustrating the complexity of Jewish tradition, and at the same time lighting up the highway, the main line of communication between God and man in Judaism. A late teacher of Jewish history at the Hebrew Union College used to say: "A volume that is brief but complete, well written, containing excellent notes and bibliography, an authoritative work in its field . . . such a book—such a book we don't have." Our failure to have this book is the most serious indictment that could be brought against contemporary Jewish scholars. The leaders of our seminaries are very busy: they must raise money, they write texts for Sunday school, they lecture at brotherhood meetings. Judaism remains an unknown discipline.

Possibly the following reflections, which are an effort to define the relationship of Judaism and Christian Existentialist thought as manifested in Kierkegaard and current "crisis theology," may suggest a few chapter headings for such a work on Jewish theology.

SOREN KIERKEGAARD (1813-55), the 19th century Dane who has been called the greatest thinker in Protestant Christianity since the days of the Reformation, inhabited an intellectual climate filled with the fair weather of Hegelian mediation. What was, was good; provided that it could be defined and understood by Hegel; and provided that it was part of the upward spiral which culminated in the perfection of the Prussian state. Against this infinite capacity for effecting synthesis, Kierkegaard raised the storm signals of stringent disjunctives. Starting with man's existence as an interested being in need, Kierkegaard asserted that the various spheres of life stood in absolute opposition to each other.

Man's quest for certainty may lead him to construct its illusion out of the passion of his immediate moods. In that case he lives on the level of the aesthetic. He may build such an illusory certitude out of the universal abstractions of the intellect, in which case he lives on the level of the ethical. According to Kierkegaard, there is an absolute disjunction between the aesthetic and ethical, both of which are something other than the religious.

Only the believer has the ability to make the religious choice, not between good and evil, but "the choice whereby one chooses good *and* evil or excludes them." This choice can be made only through the category of faith, which is separate from and transcends both the aesthetic and the ethical. Faith is the highest passion of the soul. Through faith we come to understand and accept what is the fundamental thesis of *Fear and Trembling*: "the teleological suspension of the ethical." This means that God, for purposes not disclosed, makes an absolute demand on the individual. This demand suspends or sets aside the universal imperatives of ethics, which have their source in human experience and the human mind. God's demand may be in keeping with our ethical evolution, it may be unethical, it may even be anti-ethical. The man of faith awaits this demand, appropriates it with subjective passion, and obeys.

Such, we learn, was the case with Abraham. The normal ethical relationship between father and son was set aside by the divine command that Isaac be burnt as a sacrifice. Abraham is treated as a mythological character to show the essential nature of the knight of faith. No reference is made to the historical purpose of the *akeda* story, which is a prophetic tract designed to show that God does not demand and will not accept the sacrifice of a child.

Most scholars accept this conclusion of higher criticism for several cogent reasons. We know the approximate date of the com-

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position of this narrative in the northern kingdom of Israel. The Bible itself yields ample evidence of the introduction, at this time, of foreign elements into the popular religious life of the kingdoms, even mentioning child sacrifice in the case of two kings: Ahaz and Manasseh. The prophetic party met this situation with the most strenuous opposition. Indeed, the attack on sacrifice in general is one of the major themes of the prophetic message. Here in the story of Abraham and Isaac we have a literary treatment of the same theme. Kierkegaard seizes upon the form of the narrative. He ignores the purpose of the author.

For Kierkegaard the locus of the ethical is in the will of the individual. As he observes in his book *Either/Or*: "I should like to say that in making a choice it is not so much a question of choosing the right as of the energy, the earnestness, the pathos with which one chooses. Thereby the personality announces its inner infinity, and thereby, in turn, the personality is consolidated. . . . As soon as one can get a man to stand at the crossroads in such a position that there is no recourse but to choose, he will choose the right." It is thus the form, the manner of choosing, which is of greatest import in ethical decision. What effect the choice will have, what the consequences will be, is of minor significance to Kierkegaard. (It is of interest to note, on the other hand, that in the atheistic Existentialist thought of Jean-Paul Sartre, ethical consequence occupies a position of prominence.)

For Kierkegaard, then, faith is higher than the universal ethical, even as the ethical stands above the aesthetic. Now, what is the nature of this faith? It is, of course, Christian faith. This came as no surprise to me as I rode along in the care-full railway coach. Kierkegaard attacked "Christendom" but his personal status as a Christian (or at least as a man who lived in daily dread lest God reach down, take him by the scruff of the neck, and make him a Christian) was never in doubt. Neither should the nature of Christian faith have come as a surprise to me. Perhaps the interfaith meetings had glossed over the one central concept of Christianity: faith in the Jewish man, Jesus, as God's only begotten son. Was it because of the annual stress on areas of agreement that I had pushed the whole business to the back of my mind: the brief appearance of God on earth in time; the vicarious atonement which destroyed individual responsibility; the elimination of Torah, which meant the removal of sound correctives for man's propensity towards sin; and the whole mistaken notion of justification by faith and divine election?

Whatever the cause for failing to emphasize these fundamental concepts, they are still the basis of Christian faith. As Kierkegaard himself writes in his major work, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*: "The absurd is precisely by its objective repulsion the measure of the intensity of faith in inwardness. . . . For the absurd is the object of faith, and the only object that can be believed." The Christian paradox is admitted to be absurd intellectually. That is precisely why it is held as the only proper object of faith.

It is characteristic of this interpretation of religion that communication between God and man is one way. The transcendent God breaks through to man in revelation. Man is the recipient of God's love and judgment in the form of *agapé*. There is little room here for immanence, for the upsurge of man's spirit in aspiration, for the love of God known as *eros*. Man can do nothing by himself. When confronted by God's demand, man's will is set aside, and religion supersedes ethics.

Following this tradition, there is no reason to assume that God's revelation will show an upward ethical way. This leads to the disjunction between faith and works. Even when the divine demand seems to violate previous revelations of an ethical nature, it must be unquestionably accepted and obeyed. Whatever else his many-faceted writing may mean, Franz Kafka has made interesting use of this viewpoint in his great novel *The Castle*. Directives come to the

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village from the castle. Sometimes they are in accord with human ethical understanding, sometimes they are cast in the form of practical jokes, sometimes they violate all human canons of decency.

Religious faith is thus divorced from ethical conduct. An outstanding exponent of contemporary "crisis theology," Emil Brunner, writes of the nature of God's love that "it follows that the new ethic can equally well be spoken of as a doing away with every ethic." This explains why it is so difficult to smuggle the social gospel into the teaching of Christianity.

Other interpretations of the relation of Christian faith and ethical conduct have been made. The Kierkegaardian position, however, is part of a long line of Christian thought starting with Augustine, emphasized by Marcion, restated by Calvin, its dialectic spun out by Kierkegaard, and eventuating in contemporary crisis theology. With some modification it is also basic to the viewpoint of Reinhold Niebuhr. If the separation of religious faith from ethical conduct is not essential to Christianity, it at least finds a much more favorable theological climate there than in Judaism.

IN DISTINCTION to all this we have often heard Judaism described as ethical monotheism. Judaism also starts with faith, a faith held in the passion of inwardness. All of the pragmatic and rational arguments in the world will not create faith. But Jewish faith involves no intellectual absurdity and no aesthetic offense. It is simply faith in the one God who is the source and highest expression of the ethical values that are the content of his revelation to men.

There is *agapé* in Judaism, too. God revealed the Torah to men; it was not men who sought out the Torah. But there is also room for *eros* in Judaism, for the upsurge of the human heart after God, in the certain knowledge, also held in faith, that he is nigh to all who call upon him in truth. It is God in his transcendence who reveals his will in the midst of Sinaitic thunder and lightning. It is God in his immanence who bends down low to reward the silent worshiper with a glimpse of the glory more than human. As Rabbi Leo Baeck has expressed the matter: "If at first comes the searching query with its Whence, Whither, and Why, which took hold of man, there comes now the decisive answer with its Thou Shalt and Thou Canst. If religion showed in the beginning the way from God to man, it now shows the way from man to God. Secret and commandment become united; it is only both together which give the complete meaning to our lives. The unity of both is religion as Judaism possesses it." The religious Jew lives in the spiritual tension created by God's unfathomable character in the cosmos and the emancipating commandment given as a way of life for this world now.

In Jewish ethics it is the deed which is decisive. Right will is necessary to the perfectly good act. but the will must be exercised in the pursuit of goals which are good, which enhance human welfare. God has told man what is good, and what he requires of him: that he *do* justice. It is stated in the *Midrash,* "I call heaven and earth to witness that whether a person be non-Jew or Jew, man or woman, bondsman or bondswoman, according to the deed which he does the holy spirit rests upon him." The word *mitzvah* means both commandment and, in common parlance, good deed. *Torah* is teaching and *halachah* a way in which one may walk. In Judaism ethical decision must issue in conduct which is good. In placing the locus of ethics predominantly in the results of action, Jews keep very good philosophical company. Most Western ethical thought has been of this kind, from the Greek hedonists through Bentham, Mill, and the other British Utilitarians.

Moreover, in Judaism a constant and very close relationship has been maintained between faith and works. By works we do not mean the ecclesiastical works of the church, but the good deeds, the righteous conduct, the *ma'asim tovim* of Judaism. It is the characteristic Jewish attitude to accept in faith the fact that God's revelation is always in

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terms of an expanding ethic, of greater justice and righteousness and mercy, as man grows in spiritual stature. The other aspect of this relationship is the doctrine, first taught by the prophets, that the purest worship of God lies in carrying out the implications of his ethical revelation. As long ago as the 8th century B. C. E., the prophet Amos told his people assembled for festival observance in the city of Beth-el:

I hate, I despise your feasts,
And I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Yea, though ye offer me burnt-offerings and your meal-offerings,
I will not accept them;
Neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts.
Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs;
And let me not hear the melody of thy psalteries.
But let justice well up as waters,
And righteousness as a mighty stream.

No thinker in the long tradition of the synagogue was more reserved with respect to claiming sure knowledge of God's attributes than the philosopher Maimonides. Yet it was Maimonides who showed how men could deduce at least one positive attribute of God: his ethical will. In his *Guide for the Perplexed,* Maimonides wrote: "In a similar manner we have shown that the object of the enumeration of God's thirteen attributes is the lesson that we should acquire similar attributes and act accordingly. The object of the above passage is therefore to declare that the perfection in which man can truly glory is attained by him when he has acquired, as far as this is possible for man, the knowledge of God, the knowledge of his providence, and of the manner in which it influences his creatures in their production and continued existence. Having acquired this knowledge, he will then be determined always to seek loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, and thus to imitate the ways of God."

The idea of ethical monotheism thus becomes more than an academic or pulpit phrase. The "teleological suspension of the ethical," of such fundamental import to the Existentialism of Kierkegaard, results in the divorce of religious faith from the practice of ethical works. The content of the religious life is emptied out. Each subjective thinker may replenish the cisterns from the vagaries of his own mind. There is no check on the quality of the inflow beyond the intensity of the individual's appropriation. Moreover, if one chooses what is wrong with great pathos and earnestness, the psychological expectation would seem to be that one would therefore cling all the more stubbornly to the wrong choice. No matter how earnestly he chooses, the existing individual would stand in need of a method of determining what is worthy of being chosen.

Kierkegaard himself admits a further difficulty involved in suspending the ethical when the individual enters into an absolute relation with the Absolute. "The daemonic has this in common with the divine," he writes, "the Individual can enter into an absolute relation with either." When the ethical is divorced from the religious, the man of faith will have no way of distinguishing God's demand from that of the devil. The consequences of such confusion are not difficult to imagine

These problems do not exist in Judaism. Other problems, but not these. Judaism is founded on faith in one spiritual, eternal God who is the source of revelation and the object of aspiration. Jewish ethics, while taking the good will into account, is basically an ethics of ends and consequences. Religious faith and ethical conduct stand in the closest possible relationship. It is characteristic of such an ethical religion that God's revelation is always evaluated, the truth of its divine origin tested, by the very mark which it always possesses: that of demanding greater ethical understanding and higher ethical conduct.

Considered in its most inclusive sense as the sum total of Jewish religious creativity, Torah has been the repository of this revela-

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tion. Many generations of scholars have obeyed the behest to "turn it over and turn it over, for everything is in it." In the course of this exposure to the weathering of history many codes and cults have become dead letters. But the essential meaning of Torah has been distilled, purified, and put before the people in each generation with all the clarity at the command of Jewish scholarship. This essential meaning has always been concerned with God's demand that men live the highest ethical life which they are capable of understanding and carrying out.

It is the failure of Jewish religious scholars in this generation to discharge their obligation in mature fashion which has led to the disastrous ignorance of Judaism which marks our times. That is why we lose some of our most sensitive minds—to the Catholic church, an institution never lax in setting forth its philosophy of religion for all to learn —or to sheer apathy and indifference. Even among those affiliated with the synagogue, few of our people realize that in Judaism no suspension, setting aside, or dethronement of the ethical is possible. This fundamental aspect of Judaism holds true both because Jewish ethics carries its own *telos* within itself, and because the very source of the ethical demand is conceived of in Judaism as God himself, who will not set aside his own imperative call.

Like all of Kierkegaard's works, *Fear and Trembling* is beautifully written, salted with great wit, provocative of much philosophical meditation. Yet I closed its cover with a deep sense of dissatisfaction. Whatever I had learned about Christianity, "crisis theology," and Existentialist thought, I had learned nothing about our father, Abraham. Whethconstrued as an historical character or a mythological figure, I had learned nothing about Abraham.

The trial of Moriah had been a time of anguish for the character Abraham. As traditional commentators have pointed out, his faith was subjected to the most severe test that could be conceived. But the story had been told to demonstrate the fact that God did *not* demand the sacrifice, that men should understand that ethical conduct was the mode of worship demanded by God. The rabbis were right—at least poetically—when they held in *Pirke Aboth* that the substituted ram was of such import in God's plan that it had been fashioned between the sixth day of Creation and the seventh, on which the Creator rested. Whatever else the history or myth of Abraham and Isaac meant, it did not mean a "teleological suspension of the ethical," which is a Christian doctrine historically unfounded, dialectically unnecessary, and, from the Jewish standpoint, ethically and religiously impossible.

As my Existentialist train steamed leisurely through the South that night I nevertheless felt indebted to Magister Kierkegaard. It is his great service to reveal the basic religious issue of our time. He has shown that an either/or choice does exist in contemporary religion: either the "teleological suspension of the ethical," or the obligation to perfect the world under the sovereignty of God.

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NIETZSCHE IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN EXPERIENCE

THOMAS MANN

AS FAR as I can see, there are two mistakes that warp Nietzsche's thinking and become fatal to it. The first error is a complete and, we must assume, a willful misconception of the relationship of power between instinct and intellect on earth, as if the latter were dangerously in the dominance and it were high time to save instinct from it. If one considers how completely will, impulse, and self-interest dominate and suppress intellect, reason, and the sense of justice in the great majority of people, the opinion that intellect must be overcome by instinct becomes absurd. This opinion can be explained only historically, by a momentary philosophical situation needing a corrective to saturation with rationalism, and it immediately demands a counter-correction.

As though it were necessary to defend life against spirit! As though there were the slightest danger that things on earth would ever become too spiritual! The simplest generosity should be enough to make us shield and protect the weak little flame of reason, of spirit, of justice, instead of aligning ourselves with power and instinctual life and indulging in a corybantic over-estimation of life's "negated" side, crime—the idiocy of of which we contemporaries have just experienced. Nietzsche behaved—and in doing so he has caused a great deal of harm—as though it were moral consciousness that, like Mephistopheles, threatened life with its cold, Satanic fist. For my part, I can see nothing particularly Satanic in the idea (an old idea of mystics) that life might one day be eliminated by the human spirit—something still a long, an interminably long, way off. The danger that life of itself will eliminate itself from this planet by perfecting the atomic bomb is considerably greater. But even that is improbable. Life is a cat with nine lives, and so is humanity.

THE second of Nietzsche's errors is the utterly false opposition he sets up between life and morality. The truth is that they belong together. Ethics support life, and a moral man is a real citizen of life—perhaps a little boring but extremely useful. The real opposition is between ethics and *aesthetics*. Not morality, but beauty is bound up with death, as many poets have said and sung—and how should Nietzsche have not known that? "When Socrates and Plato started talking about truth and justice," he says somewhere, "they were Greeks no longer, but Jews—or I don't know what." Well, thanks to their morality, the Jews have proven themselves to be good and tenacious children of life. They, together with their religion, their faith in a just God, have survived thousands of years, whereas that dissolute little nation of aesthetes and artists, the Greeks, very quickly disappeared from the scene of history.

But Nietzsche, though far from any kind of racial anti-Semitism, does indeed see in Judaism the cradle of Christianity and in the latter, justly but with revulsion, the germ of democracy, of the French Revolution, and

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IN THIS second part of his essay—which can be read independently of the first—THOMAS MANN considers the basic errors of Nietzsche's thought, which were foreshadowings of the anti-rationalism and brutishness of Hitler's fascism. But he also sees in Nietzsche insights which may be prophetic of a newer, higher humanism. In the previous part, published in the January issue of COMMENTARY, Dr. Mann pointed out the effect of Nietzsche's disease on his thought, holding it responsible for some of the exaggeration and hysteria in Nietzsche's writing, his alternations between exultation and despair. Nevertheless, he finds, Nietzsche's work possesses a fundamental unity that is given it by the emphasis on these *leitmotifs*: life, culture, consciousness, art, nobleness, morality, instinct. Nietzsche saw life and instinct as opposed to consciousness and morality, and attacked the two latter as being hostile, not only to life, but also to culture and art. Dr. Mann affirms that there is something in man higher than will and instinct, namely *spirit*, itself the supreme expression of life and nature. It is through the spirit that life and nature can criticize themselves—and Nietzsche as well.

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of those hateful "modern ideas" that his resounding prose brands as the morality of herd-animals. "Shopkeepers, Christians, cows, women, Englishmen, and other democrats," he says, for he sees the origins of "modern ideas" in England (the French, he claims, were only their soldiers); and what he despises and curses in these ideas is their utilitarianism and their eudaemonism, their elevation of peace and earthly happiness to the highest objects of desire—whereas it is just these base and effeminate values that the noble, tragic, heroic man kicks under his feet.

This latter is inevitably a warrior, hard with himself and with others, ready to sacrifice himself and others. The primary reproach he makes against Christianity is that it has raised the individual to such importance that one could no longer *sacrifice* him. The race, he declares, survives only by human sacrifice and Christianity is a principle that goes counter to natural selection. It has actually lowered and weakened the power, the responsibility, the high obligation to sacrifice human beings; and for thousands of years, until the arrival of Nietzsche, Christianity prevented the development of that energy of greatness which "by breeding—and on the other hand by destroying millions of misfits—shapes the man of the future and does not go to ruin amid the unprecedented misery created by it."

Who was it that recently had the power to assume this responsibility, who impudently thought themselves capable of such greatness, and unfalteringly fulfilled the high obligation to sacrifice millions of human beings? A horde of megalomaniacal petty bourgeois, at the sight of whom Nietzsche would immediately have succumbed to an extreme case of migraine with all its accompanying symptoms.

He did not live to see it. Nor did he see another war later than the old-fashioned one of 1870 with its chassepots and needle rifles. He could therefore, out of sheer hatred for the Christian and democratic philanthropic promotion of happiness, luxuriate in a glorification of war that sounds to us today like the babble of an over-excited boy. That a good cause justifies war is much too moralistic for him: it is a good war that justifies any *cause*. "The scale of values by which the various forms of society are judged today," he writes, "is completely identical with the one that assigns a higher value to *peace* than to war: but this judgment is anti-biological, is itself a spawn of life's decadence. . . . Life is a consequence of war, society itself a means for war."

Never a thought that perhaps it might not be a bad idea to try and make something else of society than a means for war. For Nietzsche society is a product of nature that, like life itself, rests on amoral premises; to attack these premises is equivalent to a treacherous attack on life itself. "One has renounced the great life," he exclaims, "when one has renounced war." And one has also renounced civilization; for, in order to be reinvigorated, the latter must relapse into thorough barbarism and it is vain sentimentality to expect anything more in the way of civilization and greatness from humanity once it has forgotten how to make war.

Nietzsche despised all nationalist narrowness. But this contempt was apparently the esoteric prerogative of a few individuals. For he describes outbreaks of self-sacrificial nationalist power-delirium with a kind of rapture that leaves no doubt that for the nations, the masses, he wants to preserve the "mighty hallucination" of nationalism.

A parenthetical remark is necessary here. We have had the experience that, under certain circumstances, unconditional pacifism can be a more than doubtful thing, that it can be base and deceitful. For years, all over Europe and the world, it was the mask of fascist sympathies; true friends of peace recognized that the Munich pact, which the democracies concluded with fascism in 1938, ostensibly to save all countries from war, was the lowest point of European history. The war against Hitler, or rather the mere readiness for it that would have been enough for their purposes, was ardently desired by the true friends of peace. But if we picture to ourselves—and the picture rises inexorably before our eyes!—how much ruin, in every sense of that word, is caused even by a war fought for the sake of humanity, how much demoralization, and what an unchaining it permits of greedy, egotistical, and anti-social impulses; if, taught by what has already been experienced, we roughly picture to ourselves what the world would look like—will look like—after the next, the third world

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war—then Nietzsche's rodomontades on the selective function of war as the preserver of civilization appear to us like the fantasies of an inexperienced novice, the child of a long period of peace and security protected by "gilt-edged investments," a period that begins to be bored with itself.

Besides, since he was at the same time predicting with astonishing prophetic foresight a succession of monstrous wars and explosions, yea the age of war *par excellence* ("to which those who come later will look back with envy and awe"), the humanitarian degeneration and castration of humanity apparently did not yet seem to be so dangerously advanced that mankind had to be philosophically incited to selective massacre. Did this philosophy want to eliminate the moral scruples that would stand in the way of the atrocities of the future? Did it want to make sure that humanity would be "in form" for this magnificent future? But all is done with such voluptuousness that, far from calling forth the moral protest it anticipates, it makes us, instead, sick and sorry for the noble spirit here raging wantonly against itself.

When medieval forms of torture are enumerated, described, and recommended with a titillation that has left its traces in contemporary German literature, it is no longer a question of mere education for manliness. It borders on vulgarity when, as a consideration "to console mollycoddles," he speaks of the lesser susceptibility to physical pain of lower races—the Negroes for instance. And then, when the song of the "blond beast" is intoned, of "the exulting monster," the type of man that "returns home, exuberant as after a student's prank, from the horrid performance of murder, arson, rape, torture," then the picture of infantile sadism becomes complete and our soul squirms in pain.

It was the romantic Novalis, a spirit kindred to Nietzsche's, who made the most striking criticism of this attitude. "The ideal of ethics," he says, "has no more dangerous competitor than the ideal of the strongest power, of the mightiest life, which has also been called (fundamentally very correctly, but very incorrectly interpreted) the ideal of aesthetic greatness. It is the maximum ideal of the barbarian and, unfortunately, in this age of declining civilization it has found very many adherents precisely among the greatest weaklings. This ideal converts man into an animal-spirit, a mixture whose brutal humor is just the thing that has a brutal attraction for weaklings."

This could not be better said. Did Nietzsche know this passage? We cannot doubt that he did. But he did not let it hinder him in the intoxicated, consciously intoxicated, and therefore not seriously meant, provocations he offered to the "ideal of morality."

What Novalis calls the ideal of aesthetic greatness, the maximum ideal of the barbarian, man as an animal-spirit, is indeed Nietzsche's superman. He describes him as the "emanation of a luxuriant excess on the part of humanity, in which a more powerful strain, a higher type of human being makes its appearance, engendered and maintained under different conditions than the average man."

These are the future masters of the earth, this is the shining type of the tyrant, for whose production democracy is just right, and who, accordingly, must use democracy as his tool and introduce his new morality by linking it in a Machiavellian way with existing ethical law, by masking it under the very words of this law. For this terror-utopia of greatness, power, and beauty would much rather lie than speak the truth—lying requires more intelligence and will-power. The superman is the man "in whom the specific qualities of life—injustice, lies, exploitation—are strongest."

It would be the greatest inhumanity to meet all these shrill and agonized challenges with contempt and mockery—and it would be sheer stupidity to answer them with moral indignation. We are face to face here with the fate of a Hamlet, a tragic destiny involving a knowledge unbearably deep, a destiny that inspires awe and compassion. "I believe," Nietzsche says somewhere, "I have correctly divined a few elements in the soul of the supreme man—*it may be that everyone* who divines him correctly *is destroyed.*" He was destroyed by it, and the horrors of his doctrine are too variously pervaded by an infinitely moving, lyrical sorrow, by deeply loving glances, by the notes of a most melancholy yearning that the arid, rainless land of his solitude should feel the dew of love—for scorn or revulsion

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to dare manifest itself before such an *ecce homo* picture.

Yet our respect for him does indeed find itself somewhat hard pressed when that "socialism of the subjugated castes," which Nietzsche mocked a hundred times and branded as a poisonous foe of the higher life, in the end demonstrates to us that his superman was nothing but an idealization of the fascist Fuehrer, and that he himself, in all his philosophizing, was pacemaker, co-creator, and idea-prompter of European—of world fascism. Incidentally, I am inclined here to reverse cause and effect and instead of believing that Nietzsche created fascism, to hold that fascism created him—that is to say: remote at bottom from politics, and being all spirit, he functioned as an infinitely sensitive instrument of expression and registration; his philosophy of power was a presentiment of the rise of imperialism, and like a quivering needle he announced the fascist era of the West in which we now live and shall continue to live for a long time to come, despite our military victory over fascism.

As a thinker who from the very beginning seceded with his entire being from the bourgeois world, he seems to have affirmed the fascist component of the post-bourgeois age and denied the socialist one: because the latter was the moral one and because he confused morality in general with bourgeois morality. But, with all his sensitivity, he was never able to shut out the influence of the socialist element on the future, and it is this fact that is not understood by the socialists who denounce him as a fascist *pur sang*. It is not quite that simple—despite all that can be said for this simplification. One thing is true: his heroic contempt of happiness, which was something very personal and of little political application, misled him into seeing a contemptible desire for the "happiness of herd-animals in a green pasture" in every aspiration to do away with the more ignoble social and economic evils, to do away with avoidable misery on earth. It is no accident that his phrase, "the dangerous life," was translated into Italian and became a part of Fascist slang. Everything he said in his extreme over-irritation with morality, humaneness, compassion, Christianity, as well as what he said in favor of the beauty of wickedness and in behalf of war and iniquity, was unfortunately well suited for a place in the shoddy ideology of fascism. Aberrations like his "Morality for Physicians," with its recommendation that the sick be killed and the inferior castrated, his insistence on the necessity of slavery, and in addition to this many of his eugenic recommendations for selection, breeding, and marriage, actually entered into the theory and practice of National Socialism—even though, perhaps, without conscious reference to him.

If the words: "By the fruits of their deeds ye shall know them!" are true, then Nietzsche is in a bad way. In Spengler, his clever ape, the master-man of Nietzsche's dream becomes the modern "realistic man in grand style," the piratical and profit-greedy man making his way over dead bodies, the financial magnate, the armament industrialist, the German industrial general director who finances fascism—in short, in Spengler, Nietzsche is taken with stupid literalness and made the philosophical patron of imperialism, of which in reality he understood nothing at all. Otherwise how could he have made plain at every point his contempt for the peddler's and shopkeeper's spirit, which he considered pacifistic, and in opposition to it have glorified the heroic spirit of the soldier? The alliance between industrialism and militarism, that political unity which is the essence of imperialism, and the fact that it is the profit-making spirit which creates wars—these things his "aristocratic radicalism" never saw.

We should not let ourselves be deceived: fascism as a trick to capture the masses, as the ultimate vulgarity and the most miserable cultural hoax that ever made history, is foreign to the very depths of the spirit of that man for whom everything centered around the question: "What is noble?" Fascism lies completely beyond his powers of imagination, and that the German middle class should have confused the Nazi assault with Nietzsche's dreams of culture-renewing barbarism was the grossest of misunderstandings. I am not speaking of Nietzsche's contemptuous disregard of all nationalism, of his hatred of the "Reich" and the stultifications of German power-politics, or of his qualities as a European, his scorn of anti-Semitism and of the entire racial swindle. What I wish to repeat is that the socialist flavor in his vision of post-bourgeois life

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is just as strong as the flavor we might call fascist.

What does it mean after all when Zarathustra exclaims: "I beseech you, my brethren, remain true to earth! No longer bury your heads in the sand of heavenly things, but carry it free, an earthly head that gives meaning to the earth! . . . Lead our vanished virtues back to earth, even as I do—yea, back to life and love: that they may give meaning to the earth, human meaning!"? This means the will to pervade the material with the human, it means materialism of the spirit, it is—in the widest sense of the word—socialism.

Here and there Nietzsche's concept of civilization shows a strongly socialist coloring, certainly a coloring that is no longer bourgeois. He stands against the cleavage between educated and uneducated, and his youthful loyalty to Wagner signifies this above all: the end of Renaissance civilization, that great bourgeois age; it also means an art for high and low, an end to delights that could not be common to the hearts of all.

It does not testify to enmity toward the workers, it testifies to the contrary, when he says: "Workingmen should learn to feel like soldiers: a compensation, a salary, but not payment. They shall live one day as the middle class does now, but *above* it, distinguishing themselves by their lack of needs, as the *higher* caste, i.e. poorer and simpler, but possessed of power." And he gave odd instructions on how to make the ownership of private property more moral: "Let all ways of accumulating *small* competences by work be kept open," he says, "but prevent effortless, sudden enrichment, withdraw from the hands of private individuals and companies all branches of transport and commerce favorable to the amassing of *large* fortunes, and particularly finance—and consider public enemies those who possess too much as well as those who possess nothing." The man who possesses nothing is a dangerous beast in the eyes of the philosophical small capitalist: that stems from Schopenhauer. How dangerous the man is who possesses too much, is something Nietzsche learned and added himself.

Around 1875, that is, more than seventy years ago, he prophesied, not exactly with enthusiasm, but simply as the result of victorious democracy, a European league of nations "in which each individual people, its frontiers drawn according to geographical suitability, has the position of a Swiss canton and its separate rights." At that time the perspective was as yet purely European. In the course of the following decade it expanded into the global and the universal. He spoke of the unified economic administration of the earth as unavoidably imminent. He called for as many international powers as possible—"to get used to a world perspective." His faith in Europe wavered. "Down at bottom the Europeans imagine that they now represent a higher type of human being on earth. Asiatic men are a hundred times nobler than the Europeans."

On the other hand he does believe it possible that in the world of the future spiritual influence might rest in the hands of the typical European, who would be a synthesis of the European past in the person of the highest, most spiritual type. "Mastery over the earth—Anglo-Saxon. The German element a good leaven, it does not know how to rule." Then again he foresees the intermingling of the German and Slavic races, and Germany as a pre-Slavic station in history, preparing the way for a Pan-Slavic Europe. The rise of Russia as a world power is entirely clear to him: "The power shared between Slavs and Anglo-Saxons, with Europe in the role of Greece under the domination of Rome."

These are striking results for an excursion into world politics made by a mind essentially concerned only with the task laid upon civilization of producing the philosopher, the artist, and the saint. At a distance of almost a century he saw just about what we see today. For the world, the newly forming concept of the world, was a unity, and wherever, in whatever direction this enormous sensibility turned and groped, it sensed the new, the coming, and registered it. Purely intuitively, Nietzsche anticipated the results of modern physics by combatting the mechanistic interpretation of the world, by denying a causally determined world, the classical "laws of nature," "natural laws," and the repetition of identical cases. "There is no second time." Nor is there any calculation according to which a determined cause must be followed by a determined effect. The interpretation of events according to cause and

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effect is false. What is involved is a struggle between two elements of unequal power, a new distribution of forces whereby the new situation becomes something fundamentally different from the old, and by no means its effect. Dynamics therefore, instead of logic and mechanics.

Nietzsche's "scientific intuitions," to paraphrase Helmholtz's remark about Goethe, have a spiritual tendency, they strain toward something, they fit into his philosophy of power, his anti-rationalism, and serve him in raising life above law—because law as such already has something "moral" in it. Whatever the present fate of this tendency, Nietzsche has been proven right as far as the natural sciences go; for these, "law" has in the meantime been weakened to mere probability, and they have lost a great deal of their faith in the concept of causality.

As is the case with every other idea he had, his ideas on physics took Nietzsche right out of the bourgeois world of classical rationality into a new one where he himself became the most alien guest of all because of his ancestry. Any socialism that refuses to give him credit for this arouses one's suspicion that that socialism is far more bourgeois than it is aware of being. The notion of Nietzsche as an aphorist without a central core must be abandoned: his philosophy is just as completely an organized system as Schopenhauer's, developed from one single fundamental, all-pervading thought. But this fundamental and initial idea is, of course, radically aesthetic in nature—which is alone enough to put his insight and thought into inevitable and irreconcilable opposition to any kind of socialism.

In the last analysis there are but two mental and inner attitudes: an aesthetic and a moral one, and socialism is a strictly moral way of looking at the world. Nietzsche, on the other hand, was the most complete and unredeemable aesthete known to the history of the human mind, and his premise, which contains his Dionysian pessimism—i.e. that life can be justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon—applies most exactly to himself, to his life, and to his work as a thinker and poet. Only as an aesthetic phenomenon can this life be justified, understood, honored; consciously, down to the self-mythologization of his last moment and even in insanity, it was an artistic spectacle, not only in its wonderful expression, but also in its innermost essence—a lyrical-tragical drama of the utmost fascination.

It is remarkable enough, though quite comprehensible, that the first form in which the European spirit rebelled against the collective morality of the bourgeois era was aestheticism. It was not without reason that I spoke of Nietzsche and Wilde in one breath—they belong together as rebels, particularly as rebels in the name of beauty, even though the revolt of the German breaker of the law-tablets went incalculably deeper and cost him immensely more in suffering, renunciation, and self-conquest.

I have read in the writings of socialist critics, especially Russian ones, that Nietzsche's aesthetic *aperçus* and judgments were often of an admirable subtlety, but that in matters of political morality he was a barbarian. This distinction is naive, for Nietzsche's glorification of the barbaric is nothing more than an excess of his aesthetic intoxication, and reveals indeed a proximity that we have every reason to ponder well: the proximity of aestheticism and barbarism. Toward the end of the 19th century, their sinister closeness was not yet seen, felt, or feared—otherwise Georg Brandes, a Jew and a liberal writer, could not have come upon the "aristocratic radicalism" of the German philosopher as a new nuance and delivered lectures propagandizing for it: which is evidence of the sense of security still reigning at that time, of the carefreeness of the bourgeois era as it declined toward its close. But it is also evidence that the skilled Danish critic did not take Nietzsche's barbarism seriously, at its face value, and that he understood it *cum grano salis*—in which he was very right.

Nietzsche's aestheticism, which is a furious denial of the spirit in favor of a beautiful, strong, and wicked life—the self-denial, that is, of a man who suffered deeply from life—infused his philosophical outpourings with something far-fetched, irresponsible, undependable, and passionately playful, an element of deepest irony that foils the understanding of the simpler reader. Not only is that which he offers art—there is an art also in reading him, and no clumsy or straightforward approach is admissible; all

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sorts of subtlety, irony, and reserve are required in reading him. Anyone who takes Nietzsche at "face value," literally, anyone who believes him, is lost. His case is, in truth, like Seneca's—Seneca, to whom, he says, one should give ear but never "trust and faith."

Are examples necessary here? The reader of the *Case of Wagner,* for instance, will find it hard to believe his eyes when, in a letter addressed to the musician Carl Fuchs in 1888, he reads: "You must not take what I say about Bizet seriously; the way I am, Bizet is not even remotely worth consideration. But he is extremely effective as an ironical antithesis to Wagner. . . ." This is all that is left, speaking "confidentially," of the rapturous eulogy of *Carmen* in the *Case of Wagner.* This is startling, but only the least of it. In another letter to the same correspondent he gives advice on how he could be best written about as a psychologist, an author, and an immoralist: not judging him with "yes" and "no," but characterizing him with intellectual impartiality. "It is *not* at all necessary, not even *desirable,* to take my side in doing so: on the contrary, a dose of curiosity, as before a strange flower, with a bit of ironical disagreement, would seem to me to be an incomparably *more intelligent* attitude toward me.—Excuse me! I have just written some naive things—a little recipe on how to extricate oneself successfully from something *impossible.* . . ."

Has any author ever *warned* us against himself in a stranger manner? "Anti-liberal to the point of spite," he called himself. Anti-liberal *because of* spite, because of an urge to provoke, would be more correct. When the hundred days' emperor, Frederick III—the liberal who married an English princess—died in 1888, Nietzsche was affected and depressed, like all German liberals. "He was after all a small glimmer of *free* thought, Germany's last hope. Now begins the regime Stoecker:—I draw the consequences and already *know* that now my *Will to Power* will be confiscated in Germany. . . ."

Well, nothing was confiscated. The spirit of the liberal era was still too strong, everything could still be said in Germany. However, there crops up unexpectedly in Nietzsche's mourning for Frederick something quite plain, simple, unparadoxical—one might say: the truth: the natural love of the spiritual human being, of the writer, for the *freedom* that is the very breath of his life—and all of a sudden the entire aesthetic phantasmagoria of slavery, war, brute force, and lordly cruelty stands somewhere far off as irresponsible play and colorful theory.

All his life he execrates the "theoretical man," but he himself is the theoretical man *par excellence* and in his purest form; his thinking is an absolute manifestation of his genius, unpragmatical to an extreme, devoid of any pedagogical responsibility, profoundly unpolitical. It is, to be honest, *without* relation to life, that dearly beloved life which he defended and raised above every other value. Nietzsche never worried in the least about how his teachings would look in practical, political reality.

The ten thousand doctrinaires of the irrational who, under his shadow, sprouted from the ground like mushrooms all over Germany, worried just as little. Small wonder! For nothing could have been essentially better suited to the German nature than Nietzsche's aesthetical theorizing. True, he flung his sulphurous bolts of criticism against the Germans, too, those "corrupters of European history," and in the end gave them credit for nothing good whatsoever. But who, finally, was more German than he, who so beautifully demonstrated to the Germans once again all those things that have made them a scourge and terror to the world and by which they themselves have been ruined: romantic passion, the urge to let the ego forever expand into the limitless without setting it a fixed object, the will that is free because it has no aim and strays into the infinite? Drunkenness and the suicidal inclination are what Nietzsche called the characteristic vices of the Germans, whose danger lay in everything that fettered the powers of reason and released the passions: "for the German's emotion is directed against his own welfare and is self-destructive like that of the drunkard. Enthusiasm as such is of less value in Germany than elsewhere, for there it is sterile." What does Zarathustra call himself? "Knower of the self—hangman of the self."

NIETZSCHE has become historical in more than one sense. He has made history, frightful history, and he did not exaggerate when he called himself "something fatal."

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For aesthetic effect, though, he did exaggerate his loneliness. He belongs, in an extremely German way, it is true, to a movement general throughout the West—a movement that includes names like Kierkegaard, Bergson, and many others among its adherents, and which is a spiritual and historical rebellion against the faith of the 18th and 19th centuries in classical rationalism. This movement has achieved its object—or has failed to do so only to the degree that its necessary continuation is the reconstitution of human reason on a new basis, the winning of a new notion of humanitarianism that would have more depth to it than the smug, shallow one of the bourgeois age.

The defense of instinct against reason and consciousness was a passing correction. The permanent correction, the eternally necessary one, remains the one exercised on life by the spirit, or, if one so wants, by morality. How time-bound, how theoretical, how inexperienced Nietzsche's romanticizing about wickedness appears to us today! We have learned to know it in all its miserableness and are no longer aesthetic enough to fear professing our faith in the good, or to be ashamed of ideas and guides so banal as truth, liberty, and justice.

The aestheticism under whose banner free spirits revolted against bourgeois morality belongs in the end to the bourgeois age itself. To leave that age behind means going from an aesthetic era to a moral and social one.

Although Nietzsche's genius has contributed much to the creation of our new atmosphere, an aesthetic philosophy of life is fundamentally incapable of mastering the problems we are now called upon to solve. At one time Nietzsche supposed that *religious* forces might still be strong enough in the future world of his vision to produce an atheistic religion *à la* Buddha that would glide over denominational differences—and that science itself would have nothing against a new ideal. "But," he adds as a precaution, "this will not be the general love of man!"

And yet what if it were to be just that? It would not have to be that optimistic and idyllic love of "humankind" to which the 18th century vowed gentle tears—and to which, by the way, civilization owes an enormous progress. When Nietzsche proclaimed: "God is dead"—a decree that meant to him the hardest of all sacrifices—in whose honor, for the sake of whose enhancement did he do this, if not man's? If he was an atheist, then he contrived to be one—no matter how sentimentally pastoral this may sound—because of his love for humankind. He must put up with being called a humanist, just as he must endure having his criticism of morality understood as a last stage of the Enlightenment. The extra-denominational religiousness he mentions I cannot conceive of as other than bound to the idea of man, as a religiously founded and accented humanism that, because of its richness of knowledge and experience, would include everything known about the infernal and demoniac in the esteem it paid to the human mystery.

Religion is reverence, reverence first of all for the mystery that is man. When a new order, new ties, and the adaptation of human society to the requirements of a fateful moment in world history are at stake, then indeed the decisions of conferences, technical measures, and juridical institutions become of little avail, and world government remains a rational utopia. What is necessary first of all is a change in the spiritual climate, a sense of the difficulty and nobility of human existence, an all-pervading, fundamental conviction from which no one will be exempted and which everyone deep inside himself will recognize as his judge. The poet and artist, imperceptibly working down from above and affecting ever wider areas as they go, can contribute something to the creation of this. Yet these things are not taught and made; they are experienced and suffered.

That philosophy is no cold abstraction, but is experience, suffering, and sacrifice for the sake of humanity—this was Nietzsche's knowledge and example. He was driven far afield into grotesque fallacies, but the future was in truth the land of his love, and for posterity, as for us whose youth is incalculably indebted to him, he will stand as a figure, tender, tragic, and venerable, enveloped by the flashing summer lightning that heralds the dawn of a new time.

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THE MONTH IN HISTORY

THE LONDON CONFERENCE AND AFTER

Parting of East and West — German Question — Civil War in Palestine

MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM

The End of Pretense

With the breakdown of the London Conference of Foreign Ministers, the struggle between Russia and the Western powers for control of the world entered a new phase. At Teheran and Yalta, with the war still on, the existence of that struggle had been officially ignored. Its reality had been obscured by an agreement to postpone the consideration of all questions on which an immediate decision was not essential. Sometimes this postponement was frankly agreed on; sometimes it was concealed by the adoption of ambiguous formulations. As for those questions which required immediate decisions, these were settled by unilateral concessions on the part of the Western powers. The concessions were dictated in part by the fear that Stalin would negotiate a separate peace with Hitler if his demands were not met, and in part by the hope that he would deal with his allies on a basis of mutual trust if they were. They did not, perhaps, seem as significant at the time as they did in retrospect; after all, the sacrifice of the democratic forces of Eastern Europe was habitual to the Western powers.

But as surrender to the Russians on some questions failed to make them any more tractable on others, and as it became ever more difficult to postpone decisions on questions in which the Western powers felt themselves vitally involved, this formula began to break down. At Potsdam, and in the subsequent period, the absence of agreement had at last become clear. But the hope of it remained, and "solutions" were adopted whose workability assumed agreement. Instead of concealing their disagreements by ambiguous phrases, the powers now "settled" them by referring them for solution to such organs as the Council of Foreign Ministers and the Allied Control Councils in Berlin and Vienna. But since these bodies were composed of representatives of the same principals whose disagreements they were to resolve, and since they still operated under the "principle of unanimity," it was not surprising that the differences which were referred to them tended to persist and become sharper instead of disappearing. Disputes piled up; the four-power occupation of Germany and Austria began to dissolve into its component parts, and both the United Nations and the Council of Foreign Ministers served more and more as sounding boards for the disputes of East and West and less and less as instruments for their resolution. Still, however, the forms of seeking agreement were from time to time observed; Washington and London solemnly discussed how much they might still concede to Moscow without disaster, and how much they

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The aim of "The Month in History" is to select out of the stream of events the principal developments that form the framework of Jewish affairs —in America, Europe, Palestine, and throughout the world—and to set down, as objectively as possible, their significance in the light of long-range historical perspective. The judgments expressed in this department are, of course, those of the writer. Maurice J. Goldbloom has recently returned from Europe, where he spent some weeks studying the strength of democratic forces. Mr. Goldbloom has had many years of experience as a news analyst and was associate editor of the magazine *Common Sense*. He was born in New York City in 1911 and is a graduate of Columbia University.

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might undertake on their own initiative without making the breach irreparable. And many in Britain still saw that nation's role as one of mediation between two great protagonists who were equally to be feared. But all of this could neither avert nor indefinitely postpone the day when it would be necessary to take into consideration the realities of the situation. And the first of these realities was that the Russians were neither in search of mediators nor in a mood for compromise.

In essence, they made this clear by their refusal to attend the Paris conference on the Marshall Plan and by their peremptory command to the Czechs and Poles to withdraw the acceptances those nations had already sent. Even then, however, the Americans and British did not abandon all hope that the London Conference of Foreign Ministers might arrive at some basis for the unification of Germany, or at least for the conclusion of a peace treaty with Austria. They came prepared to offer substantial concessions in return for an agreement. But they soon discovered that the Soviet delegation had come to present ultimatums, not to negotiate claims. Indeed, on some questions it even refused to define its demands, insisting on the acceptance of its own—unspecified—interpretation of the ambiguities of Yalta and Potsdam.

When the conference finally broke up after three weeks, it had only two accomplishments to its credit. One was an agreement that Pakistan should be added to the list of nations invited to the conference on the German peace treaty. The importance of this was somewhat diminished by the fact that there seemed little likelihood that the conference in question would assemble for a long time to come. The other, an agreement on a revised level of production for the German steel industry, was contingent on the adoption of a plan for German unity. Since it was precisely such a plan that the Foreign Ministers had demonstrated their inability to produce, this achievement also was of somewhat nebulous value, except in so far as it involved the acceptance by the French of a degree of German industrialization which they had hitherto resisted.

The specific issue on which the conference broke up was that of reparations. Here, the Russians insisted on receiving from Germany ten billion dollars worth of goods at 1938 prices—the same demand which they had presented at Yalta—but refused to give any accounting of the amount which they had received or taken in the interim. Since the United States and Britain were already pouring money into the Western zones of Germany, it was clear that for a long time to come any reparations which the Russians might receive from German current production would in fact be paid by the Western allies. Hence the reluctance of the Americans to agree to the Russian proposals on this question was easy enough to understand.

Yet, if the reparations question furnished the occasion for the breakdown of the conference, it could hardly have been said to furnish the reason. For this lay, not in any specific disagreement, but in the frame of mind which made the disagreements inevitable. And this, in turn, seemed to stem from a Russian conviction that the United States —impelled by the force of domestic public opinion, an impending depression, or both—would soon be forced to withdraw from active participation in European affairs, after which all things would be possible to the Soviet Union.

The Cold War Warms Up

But if this was what Stalin expected, he nevertheless seemed unwilling to leave its occurrence to any dialectical inevitability. Rather, every effort was made to speed the parting guest. The anti-American campaign, which had started in the Communist press and blossomed organizationally in the Cominform—or, as one correspondent called it, the Misinform—now began to bear fruit in riots and political strikes. And as Europe's Communists tried to push the United States out of that continent, American Communists redoubled their efforts to pull it out.

The first skirmish in the new campaign opened almost as the Foreign Ministers met, with the declaration of a general strike by the French trade unions, organized in the Communist-dominated CGT. Certainly the almost Balkan poverty of the French workers, accentuated by war and inflation and aggravated by a ubiquitous black market, gave them ample reason to strike. Even when the Communists had been a government party, pursuing a policy of industrial peace, they had frequently been unable to restrain the workers from going out on strike in the

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hope of adjusting their wages to the steadily rising prices. But the origin and timing of the general strike were too clearly political for it to win the undivided adherence of the workers; enough went out to disrupt production, but in the key fields of transportation and communication, the great majority ignored the call. What was more, this was no passive failure to strike; it was an organized refusal, led by non-Communist union officials inside and outside the CGT. The result was that the strike was not merely unsuccessful *per se*; it split the CGT wide open and resulted in the secession from it of almost half its membership, and the formation of a new, non-Communist, trade union federation, the Force Ouvrière.

If the Communists had expected the general strike to bring down the "third force" government of Premier Schuman, or to mobilize the workers of France against the Marshall plan, they appeared to have been signally unsuccessful. There was no doubt that the aftermath of the strike left the Schuman government stronger, at least for the moment, than it had been, and that Communist influence over the French workers had suffered a disastrous setback. But whether these results were more than temporary remained to be seen. The damage which the strike had done to French production was significant; it could play an important role in delaying or even preventing economic recovery. And the future of the "third force" coalition of Socialists, Popular Republicans, and Radicals depended on its success in achieving at least a considerable measure of recovery.

Perhaps warned by the experience of their French comrades, the Communists of Italy confined themselves for the time being to local actions of limited duration. By these, they were able to maintain a state of unrest and uncertainty, without risking a showdown such as had occurred in France. In Italy, too, they showed a willingness to compromise with the anti-Communist minority in the trade unions in order to preserve at least nominal unity under their own command. In some degree, this may have been due to the reluctance of the Italian Communist leader Palmiro Togliatti to enter on any struggle which would have alienated a part of his rather amorphous following. If this were the case, it seemed doubtful that Moscow would indefinitely tolerate the continuance of such a deviation from the prescribed line. (Even the British Communist party, which—perhaps because of its unimportance, perhaps because even Moscow was resigned to a certain amount of eccentricity on the part of the British—had always enjoyed an unusual degree of independence within the Comintern, was now compelled to come out reluctantly against the campaign for increased production in British industry.)

On the Washington Front

However, the success or failure of the Cominform's tactics seemed likely to be determined less by events in Europe than by decisions in Washington. For it was clear that only the economic rehabilitation of Europe could, in the long run, save it for democracy; and it was equally clear that Europe's economy could not be restored in time, if at all, without substantial American assistance. Such assistance had, of course, been granted in the two and a half years since the end of the war. (Indeed, its annual magnitude had been little different from what is proposed under the Marshall Plan.) But it had been given piecemeal and in a haphazard fashion; it had saved Europe from collapse, but it had not in any significant measure restored her capacity for self-support. Now, under the Marshall Plan, there was at least a cautious and tentative attempt to integrate American aid and European productive capacity with the aim of attaining that goal.

True, neither the degree of integration nor the scope of the contemplated American assistance was altogether reassuring. Despite some tentative steps toward the removal of trade barriers and the cooperative utilization of complementary resources, Europe's economy still remained atomized by national boundaries. And soaring prices in the United States made it more than questionable whether the sums requested by the administration for European aid under the Marshall Plan would be even approximately adequate for the satisfaction of the needs they were supposed to meet.

But if the adequacy of the Marshall Plan was open to question, the necessity for it was not. For the state of Europe was such that it could not hold out much longer without very substantial aid; the alternative was so sharp a reduction in the already perilously

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low standards of living of its peoples that few governments would be able to survive. Nevertheless, substantial opposition to the program came from those who still felt that it was not for the United States to assume the burdens of a staggering Europe. And, not despite but rather because of the necessity of the Plan, it was violently opposed by the Communists and those who echoed them.

One result of the Communist drive to force American withdrawal from European affairs was Henry Wallace's announcement of his intention to run for the presidency on a platform of peace. Wallace is, of course, no Communist. (Communism, whatever one might think of it, does after all involve an integrated political philosophy such as Wallace has never achieved.) But the announcement of his candidacy came after a vigorous build-up from Communist sources, and in response to an invitation from the Progressive Citizens of America. The PCA had never had much non-Communist support; most of what there was—including such stalwarts as Frank Kingdon and Bartley Crum—melted away in the face of the Wallace boom. Labor groups and liberal publications hastened to make it clear that they would not support Wallace. Nevertheless, his candidacy could not by any means be discounted altogether. The Communist party had the most effective political organization in the United States, and there was a large body of progressive discontent in the United States to which Wallace might appeal. Most of those whose votes he could expect did not agree with a large part of his program, but they did, for reasons of greater or lesser validity, completely reject the two old parties. Many, perhaps most, of them would have preferred to vote for a new anti-Communist progressive party. But since most anti-Communist liberals still adhered to the Truman administration, there was no such party in the field. And the Wallace candidacy seemed certain to benefit from that fact. Thus, in the crucial state of New York, the Gallup poll showed that Wallace would get from 13 to 18 per cent of the vote, depending on who was the Republican candidate. This was considerably more than the American Labor party vote in state elections.

Communist opposition was not, however, an unmixed evil. For there were many in the United States who, though they might still hesitate about saving Europe, had no such hesitation about saving Europe from Communism. James Reston, writing in the *New York Times*, declared cheerfully: "The Republicans may let the Truman-Marshall foreign policy down. And even the Democrats have their shaky days, but the Communists abroad and their supporters at home can still be counted on to get the Marshall Plan through Congress. . . . If it hadn't been for the activity of the Communists in Europe there would never have been a program of this magnitude, and if they were to lie low for a while even now, the administration would be in serious trouble.

"Molotov and Stalin, however, have never failed the administration in any test with Congress yet. When the British loan was in jeopardy on Capitol Hill, the Communists in Europe provided the fears that put it over. . . . When Congress was fed up with European appropriations last summer and the State Department conceived the Marshall Plan as a new approach to the problem, Mr. Molotov saved the Administration considerable embarrassment by walking out of the Paris Conference. And when the Interim Aid Bill was in the process of debate last month, the Communist bid for power through sabotage strikes in France and Italy furnished enough evidence to convince everybody except a few members of the House Appropriations Committee."

This did not, perhaps, offer too much reassurance as to the depth of understanding underlying much of the new American internationalism. But it did, at least, offer a reasonable guarantee that it would not altogether collapse. For the Communist threat was one which would certainly exist until the restoration of Europe had been in large measure accomplished.

On the German Front

Closely related to the Marshall Plan—indeed, vital to its success—was the rehabilitation of Western Germany. Here, in what was potentially the greatest industrial area of Europe, the United States was in fact a European government. So far, its record in promoting industrial recovery was considerably worse than that of any of the free countries of Europe within their own boundaries.

In part, this failure had been the result of

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deliberate policy. When American troops marched into Germany, they brought with them, in only slightly modified form, the idea of destroying Germany's industrial potential which Henry Morgenthau had elaborated to Roosevelt and Churchill at Quebec. And even when, under the pressure of facts, the "pastoralization" theory was jettisoned, its after-effects remained in a long series of directives and—perhaps even more important—a complex of attitudes on the part of military government authorities which effectively hampered any effort to revive German production.

But in even greater degree, the continued prostration of the German economy was the result of the absence of any real American policy. And this, of course, was reinforced by the partition of Germany into four zones, united only by the fiction of four-power harmony and the fact of East-West rivalry, as expressed through the Allied Control Council in Berlin.

In the development of the Marshall Plan, it had been made abundantly clear that any significant immediate increase in European production could come only from Germany. Here were the steel mills, the coal mines, the machine and chemical factories, whose missing output accounted for a major part of Europe's deficit. And here, too, was an area whose deficit of several hundred million dollars a year—paid by the occupying powers—could never be removed except by the revival of industrial activity.

Nevertheless—despite the good intentions expressed in the agreement for the merger of the British and American zones, and in the new American directive of last July—effective planning for the rehabilitation of Western Germany as a part of Western Europe was hampered by the desire to achieve an economically integrated Germany. The two courses were not completely compatible, and as long as the second remained an immediate possibility, the British and Americans hesitated to embark unreservedly on the first.

The breakdown of the London Conference, however, made it obvious that a unified Germany was a long way off. At the same time, it underlined the necessity of concentrating on the rehabilitation of Western Europe, in the face of Russia's political and economic offensive. Hence, almost immediately after the Foreign Ministers left London, the United States and Britain announced the conclusion of a new bizonal agreement, in which the United States assumed a major part of both expense and power. And shortly thereafter they made public a plan for the establishment of an expanded and strengthened German administration for the bizonal economy. Meanwhile, negotiations continued for the incorporation of the French zone in the rest of Western Germany. And the French, whose efforts to mediate between East and West had finally been abandoned in the face of Russia's persistent unwillingness to recognize any neutrals, seemed at last ready to sacrifice their prejudice against any degree of German unity.

The Propaganda Front

An increasingly open struggle between the United States and Russia was also developing in the field of propaganda. Russian attacks on American imperialism were, to be sure, no novelties on the air or in the Communist press. But the United States had for a long time made little effort to reply in kind. Even the rather mild activities of the "Voice of America" had been hamstrung by an economy-minded Congress.

But here again the increasing intensity of the Communist campaign against the United States was at last bearing fruit. Almost every Congressman who visited Europe returned convinced of the need for a more active American information program to combat Soviet propaganda. As a result, the information program of the State Department, which had existed for a year on half-rations and without specific legal status, now seemed certain to be established on a permanent basis and with more adequate funds than it had ever had before. The State Department released its first salvo with the publication of the secret correspondence between Germany and the Soviet Union during the period of their wartime pact.

At the same time, not all the "anti-Communist" propaganda in which the United States was now beginning to engage seemed likely to prove effective. This was particularly true of the campaign against Communism inaugurated by Military Government in Germany. In part, this campaign suffered from its purely negative approach; in part, it was also handicapped by the fact

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that to a large extent it had the character of an order to the German people from the occupying power, and tended to make those Germans who opposed Communism appear in the light of American agents. And worst of all, perhaps, many of those to whom the task of combating Communism was delegated were not quite sure what it was they were supposed to fight. Thus one Military Government officer recently told a German Socialist leader: "I'm all for you fellows; I know you're against Communism. But you're infiltrated by the Communists. All this trade-unionism stuff—I learned in school that's Communism." And it seemed painfully clear that this was not an isolated instance of the functioning of the military mind. Hence there were many who ardently hoped that the transfer of authority in Germany from the Army to the State Department, already long overdue, would not again be postponed beyond the June 30 date recently announced.

The Little Wars

If the world's major conflict was still being fought out in the fields of diplomacy and propaganda, there were others where more directly lethal methods were already in use. Some of these, such as the civil wars in Greece and China, were merely aspects of the worldwide struggle between the two colossi. Others, however, were tangential to the main issue, however much they might threaten to become involved with it.

Thus, the still-recurring communal warfare in India and Pakistan was more a reflection of the impact of the sickness of modern times on more ancient ills than it was of the antagonism between the United States and Russia. Yet it could not be without bearing on the greater struggle, for political instability in Central Asia offered the Soviet Union an admirable opportunity to fish in troubled waters. And if the conflict between the two dominions in such areas as Kashmir, together with the slaughter of Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan and Moslems in India, resulted in the materialization of that threat to the peace with which each dominion charged the other, it was by no means certain that the great powers would not become involved.

For the moment, however, the moral influence of Gandhi seemed likely to avert a full-scale war. But it was a frail reed on which to rest, for at the age of seventy-nine the Mahatma seemed unlikely to survive many more of the fasts which were the ultimate sanction to which he resorted. And if Gandhi went, there was no one to take his place.

Bloodshed in Palestine

THE partition of India had been sought by one side, and reluctantly accepted by the other. Yet despite the consent of both parties and the moral influence of Gandhi, it had already cost tens of thousands of lives. The partition of Palestine had been bitterly opposed by the Arabs and accepted by the Zionists, not because it was what they wanted, but because it was the most that they could expect to get. And there were no Gandhis in Palestine.

It was therefore not surprising that, even before the departure of British troops and police, Palestine had a civil war well under way. The official casualty figures for the first forty days after the UN's adoption of partition showed 634 dead, of whom 330 were Arabs, 262 Jews, and most of the remainder British. Zionist sources, however, estimated the total deaths at 692 Arabs and 281 Jews. In general, Zionists protested that the British consistently underestimated the number of Arabs killed by them. (Thus Histadrut sent a telegram to the *Manchester Guardian* in which it asserted that Arab casualties were twice the official estimates.)

So far, the Arabs seemed to have little taste for large-scale warfare, despite occasional incursions of armed bands from Syria who attacked Jewish villages near the border. This was probably due to a reluctance on the part of their leaders to commit themselves to a general offensive until Britain's withdrawal made it possible for the Arab states to send in well-armed volunteers capable of meeting the Haganah in open battle. Exceptions to this rule, however, were to be noted in the mixed cities of Jerusalem and Haifa. In the latter, an Irgun bomb was thrown into a line of Arab workers at the oil refinery—where Jews and Arabs had worked together amicably even at the height of the 1939 riots. As a result, 42 Jewish employes of the refineries were massacred by Arab workers. (In this instance, a local Haganah leader said that he would kill the bomb-throwers if he knew who they were.) In Jerusalem another Irgun

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bomb was thrown into an Arab crowd at the Damascus gate of the Old City; this was followed by the institution of an Arab blockade of the Jewish quarter of the city. Richard Mowrer of Overseas News Agency reported: "The Arabs assert that their road-blocks and identity check are imperative precautions against the Jewish terrorists, who often operate disguised as British soldiers and policemen. The Arabs further assert that they have no objection to Jews living in the Holy City but that they object to the presence there of members of the Haganah." Mowrer went on to state that the Zionists, on the other hand, claimed that withdrawal of Haganah from Jerusalem would expose the Jewish inhabitants of that city to massacre.

Irgun and the Sternists were, of course, devotees of the doctrine that the best weapon against Arab terrorism was counter-terrorism, applied in advance. Haganah, on the other hand, appeared to be wavering back and forth between different concepts of its function, and it was not always easy to tell which was being applied. Thus, immediately after the blowing up of the Semiramis Hotel in Jerusalem, a Haganah informant told Richard Mowrer that Haganah was now passing to the offensive, declaring: "The Arabs have shouted war for five weeks. Now they're going to get it." At the same time another Haganah spokesman explained that the hotel was an Arab military headquarters with no bona fide guests. The next day the Jewish Agency apologized for the fact that one of the victims of the bombing was the Spanish consul, and the day after that Haganah let it be known that the bombing had been a breach of discipline on the part of a local commander. Similarly, after blasting an Arab "military base" in the village of Khisas, Haganah apologized for the fact that five of the ten persons killed in the bombing were children under the age of ten.

Meanwhile, government offices were repeatedly disrupted by the refusal of their staffs to report to work under conditions they regarded as unsafe. Jewish employes refused to report if the guards on duty included Arabs; Arab employes refused to work unless there were also Jews present, since they feared that otherwise they would be the victims of Zionist bombs. For the moment, offices were again enabled to function when the British agreed to supply all-British detachments to guard them. But, in view of the impending departure of the British, this could be only a stopgap.

Preparations for a State*

While both sides prepared to expand the area and intensity of the struggle in Palestine as soon as the British should depart, the UN's Palestine Committee constituted itself and prepared to implement partition. Karel Lisicky, the Czech member of the Commission, wondered out loud just how much it might be expected to accomplish as long as the only armaments at its disposal consisted of the chairman's gavel. The disposition of Zionists to depend on Haganah to carry through partition unaided was noticeably on the wane. They were no longer referring to the eighty or a hundred thousand members it could mobilize, or stressing the superiority of their equipment to that, not only of the Palestinian Arabs, but of the neighboring states. Estimates of Haganah's effectives were now seldom more than twenty or twenty-five thousand, and frequently much lower. Nor did Zionist leaders seem any longer to feel that either the numbers or the armament of Haganah were really adequate to the protection of the Jewish state. Thus Moshe Shertok declared that an international police force was necessary, but that if it was not possible, Haganah must at least receive arms from the United Nations. But since the claim that they themselves could take care of implementation had always been one of the strongest arguments used by Zionists to sway doubters, it was questionable whether their new line would fall on altogether receptive ears. Some now began to regret that they been so free with unqualified declarations demanding Britain's withdrawal; where a few months previously they had declared that once this had occurred, they could establish the Jewish state without outside help, they now condemned the British for their hasty and irresponsible departure. But the British showed no inclination whatever to stand upon the order of their going, despite those who had maintained that it was their intention to seize on any pretext in order to stay. Rather, they

*A more extensive discussion of the problems facing the nascent Jewish state may be found in the article by David Horowitz, on page 97 of this issue.—ED.

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even seemed anxious to remove themselves ahead of schedule from an area where both Zionists and Arabs, in the intervals of killing one another, were not reluctant to take pot-shots at British soldiers and police.

Thus the problem of implementation was once again on the doorstep of the United Nations, which had so studiously avoided it in adopting the partition report. Whether it was now any readier to accept responsibility than it had been in November was, however, still not clear. To be sure, New York newspapers published rumors that the UN Military Staffs Committee was informally discussing the creation of an international force for Palestine. The United States government issued an official denial that any American representative had participated in such discussions. Trygve Lie assured the Committee that it would have the full backing of the Security Council. In view of the well-known obstacles to effective action in that body, the fact that it had no forces at its disposal and no immediate prospect of obtaining any—certainly not by the middle of May—and the absence of any provision for such forces in the UN budget, Mr. Lie's statement was not altogether convincing.

Under the circumstances, it surprised few that the Jewish Agency had begun to acquire high explosives in the United States. Unfortunately for the Agency, the United States had imposed an embargo on arms shipments to the Middle East. Moreover, the Agency's purchases (made through a series of intermediaries) were discovered just after some cases of TNT being illegally shipped to Palestine as "used machinery" broke open on a Jersey City dock. There was no evidence to connect the Agency with the Jersey City shipment—which was reported to contain enough explosives to blow up six cities the size of Jersey City—or as to its intended use, but government officials repossessed the Agency's purchases on behalf of the War Assets Administration.

If the military part of the Agency's preparations was the most dramatic, it was only one aspect. Another, and perhaps more fundamental, aspect was economic. Here, the United Jewish Appeal occupied a crucial position. To provide for an expected seventy-five thousand immigrants in 1948, the United Palestine Appeal estimated that its constituent organizations would require $283,000,000. At the same time, the Joint Distribution Committee and the United Service for New Americans submitted budgets of $98,000,000 and $13,000,000 respectively. Had the United Jewish Appeal attempted to raise this entire sum, it would have had to adopt a budget of almost four hundred million dollars.

But in 1947, despite the highest collections on record, it had failed by some forty millions to achieve its goal of $170,000,000. Accordingly, in an attempt to achieve a compromise between the necessary and the possible, the UJA set a minimum goal of $250,000,000, with the proviso that all sums obtained above this amount were to go to the establishment of the Jewish state. The other agencies participating in the UJA willingly agreed to this provision. Meanwhile, the Jewish Agency announced its intention of approaching the State Department, the Export-Import Bank, and the International Bank for loans to meet the half of its prospective expenses not provided for in the UJA goal. There was as yet, however, no indication that any of these agencies was in a responsive mood.

At the same time, the Agency undertook to prepare plans for the structure of the Jewish state. In part, these dealt with the planning and staffing of ministries in the provisional government. But they also included preparations for the establishment of a constituent assembly, based on the existing Jewish National Council. It was not stated whether in government or in the constituent assembly there would be provision for including representatives of the Arabs who would form 45 per cent of the population of the proposed state. At least in respect to the constituent assembly, some effort to secure Arab representation would seem to have been required by the terms of the UN decision. However, there was no evidence that the Arabs would participate even if invited.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE HARLEM GHETTO: WINTER 1948

The Vicious Circle of Frustration and Prejudice

JAMES BALDWIN

HARLEM, physically at least, has changed very little in my parents' lifetime or in mine. Now as then the buildings are old and in desperate need of repair, the streets are crowded and dirty, there are too many human beings per square block. Rents are 10 to 58 per cent higher than anywhere else in the city; food, expensive everywhere, is more expensive here and of an inferior quality; and now that the war is over and money is dwindling, clothes are carefully shopped for and seldom bought. Negroes, traditionally the last to be hired and the first to be fired, are finding jobs harder to get, and, while prices are rising implacably, wages are going down. All over Harlem now there is felt the same bitter expectancy with which, in my childhood, we awaited winter: it is coming and it will be hard, there is nothing anyone can do about it.

All of Harlem is pervaded by a sense of congestion, rather like the insistent, maddening, claustrophobic pounding in the skull that comes from trying to breathe in a very small room with all the windows shut. Yet the white man walking through Harlem is not at all likely to find it sinister and no more wretched than any other slum.

Harlem wears to the casual observer a casual face; no one remarks that—considering the history of black men and women and the legends that have sprung up about them, to say nothing of the ever-present policemen, wary on the street corners—the face is, indeed, somewhat excessively casual and may not be as open or as careless as it seems. If an outbreak of more than usual violence occurs, as in 1935 or in 1943, it is met with sorrow and surprise and rage; the social hostility of the rest of the city feeds on this as proof that they were right all along, and the hostility increases; speeches are made, committees are set up, investigations ensue. Steps are taken to right the wrong, without, however, expanding or demolishing the ghetto. The idea is to make it less of a social liability, a process about as helpful as make-up on a leper. Thus, we have the Boys' Club on West 134th Street, the playground at West 131st and Fifth Avenue; and, since Negroes will not be allowed to live in Stuyvesant Town, Metropolitan Life is thoughtfully erecting a housing project in the center of Harlem called Riverton; however, it is not likely that any but the professional class of Negroes—and not all of them—will be able to pay the rent.

MOST of these projects have been stimulated by perpetually embattled Negro leaders and by the Negro press. Concerning Negro leaders, the best that one can say is that they are in an impossible position and that the handful motivated by genuine concern maintain this position with heartbreaking dignity. It is unlikely that anyone ac-

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WHENEVER one ponders the progress of the American ideals of freedom and equality in the framework of today's realities, one inevitably thinks of the South—and of Harlem. How is it in Harlem in the winter of 1948? JAMES BALDWIN'S description of the Harlem ghetto also touches upon the delicate and perplexing problem of Negro-Jewish relations in this country, an unhappy complex which requires our best in understanding and courage. Mr. Baldwin was born in New York City in 1924.

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quainted with Harlem seriously assumes that the presence of one playground more or less has any profound effect upon the psychology of the citizens there. And yet it is better to have the playground; it is better than nothing; and it will, at least, make life somewhat easier for parents who will then know that their children are not in as much danger of being run down in the streets. Similarly, even though the American cult of literacy has chiefly operated to provide only a market for the *Readers' Digest* and the *Daily News,* literacy is still better than illiteracy; so Negro leaders must demand more and better schools for Negroes, though any Negro who takes this schooling at face value will find himself virtually incapacitated for life in this democracy. Possibly the most salutary effect of all this activity is that it assures the Negro that he is not altogether forgotten, people *are* working in his behalf, however hopeless or misguided they may be; and as long as the water is troubled it cannot become stagnant.

The terrible thing about being a Negro leader lies in the term itself. I do not merely mean the somewhat condescending differentiation the term implies, but the nicely refined torture a man can experience from having been created and defeated by the same circumstances. That is, Negro leaders have been created by the American scene, which thereafter works against them at every point; and the best that they can hope for is ultimately to work themselves out of their jobs, to nag contemporary American leaders and the members of their own group until a bad situation becomes so complicated and so bad that it cannot be endured any longer. It is like needling a blister until it bursts. On the other hand, one cannot help observing that some Negro leaders and politicians are far more concerned with their careers than with the welfare of Negroes, and their dramatic and publicized battles are battles with the wind. Again, this phenomenon cannot be changed without a change in the American scene. In a land where, it is said, any citizen can grow up and become president, Negroes can be pardoned for desiring to enter Congress.

THE Negro press, which supports any man, provided he is sufficiently dark and well-known—with the exception of certain Negro novelists accused of drawing portraits unflattering to the race—has for years received vastly confusing criticism based on the fact that it is helplessly and always exactly what it calls itself, that is, a press devoted entirely to happenings in or about the Negro world. This preoccupation can probably be forgiven in view of the great indifference and frequent hostility of the American white press. The Negro press has been accused of not helping matters much —as, indeed, it has not, nor do I see how it could have. And it has been accused of being sensational, which it is, but this is a criticism difficult to take seriously in a country so devoted to the sensational as ours.

The best-selling Negro newspaper, I believe, is the *Amsterdam Star-News,* which is also the worst, being gleefully devoted to murders, rapes, raids on love-nests, interracial wars, any item, however meaningless, concerning prominent Negroes, and whatever racial gains can be reported for the week—all in just about that order. Apparently, this policy works well; it sells papers—which is, after all, the aim; in my childhood we never missed an edition. The day the paper came out we coul hear, far down the street, the news vendor screaming the latest scandal and people rushing to read about it.

The *Amsterdam* has been rivalled, in recent years, by the *People's Voice,* a journal, modeled on *PM* and referred to as *PV*. *PV* is not so wildly sensational a paper as the *Amsterdam,* though its coverage is much the same (the news coverage of the Negro press is naturally pretty limited). *PV*'s politics are less murky, to the left of center (the *Amsterdam* is Republican, a political affiliation that has led it into some strange doubletalk), and its tone, since its inception, has been ever more hopelessly militant, full of warnings, appeals, and open letters to the government —which, to no one's surprise, are not answered—and the same rather pathetic preoccupation with prominent negroes and what they are doing. Columns signed by Lena Horne and Paul Robeson appeared in *PV* until several weeks ago, when both severed their connections with the paper. Miss Horne's column made her sound like an embittered Eleanor Roosevelt, and the only column of Robeson's I have read was concerned, pertinently enough, with the current witch-hunt in Hollywood, discussing the

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kind of movies under attack and Hollywood's traditional treatment of Negroes. The implication, with which I agree, was that the House Un-American Activities Committee might find concepts more dangerous to America in a picture like *Gone with the Wind* than in the far less successful *Watch on the Rhine.*

THE only other newspapers in the field with any significant sale in Harlem are the *Pittsburgh Courier,* which has the reputation of being the best of the lot, and the *Afro-American,* which resembles the New York *Journal-American* in layout and type and seems to make a consistent if unsuccessful effort to be at once readable, intelligent, and fiery. The *Courier* is a high-class paper, reaching its peak in the handling of its society news and in the columns of George S. Schuyler, whose Olympian serenity infuriates me, but who, as a matter of fact, reflects with great accuracy the state of mind and the ambitions of the professional, well-to-do Negro who has managed to find a place to stand. Mr. Schuyler, who is remembered still for a satirical novel I have not read, called *Black No More,* is aided enormously in this position by a genteel white wife and a child-prodigy daughter—who is seriously regarded in some circles as proof of the incomprehensible contention that the mating of white and black is more likely to produce genius than any other combination. (The *Afro-American* recently ran a series of articles on this subject, "The Education of a Genius," by Mrs. Amarintha Work, who recorded in detail the development of her mulatto son, Craig.)

Ebony and *Our World* are the two big magazines in the field, *Ebony* looking and sounding very much like *Life,* and *Our World* being the black man's *Look. Our World* is a very strange, disorganized magazine indeed, sounding sometimes like a college newspaper and sometimes like a call to arms, but principally, like its more skillful brothers, devoted to the proposition that anything a white man can do a Negro can probably do better. *Ebony* digs feature articles out of such things as the "real" Lena Horne and Negro FBI agents, and it travels into the far corners of the earth for any news, however trivial, concerning any Negro or group of Negroes who are in any way unusual and/or newsworthy. The tone of both *Ebony* and *Our World* is affirmative; they cater to the "better class of Negro." *Ebony's* November issue carried an editorial entitled "Time To Count Our Blessings," which began by accusing Chester Himes (author of the recent novel *Lonely Crusade*) of having a color psychosis, and went on to explain that there are Negro racists also who are just as blind and dangerous as Bilbo, which is incontestably true, and that, compared to the millions of starving Europeans, Negroes are sitting pretty, which is, to say the least, a rather desperate comparison. The editorial concluded that Negroes had come a long way and that "as patriotic Americans" it was time "we" stopped singing the blues and realized just how bright the future was. These cheering sentiments were flanked—or underscored, if you will—by a photograph on the opposite page of an aging Negro farm woman carrying home a bumper crop of onions. It apparently escaped the editors of *Ebony* that the very existence of their magazine, and its table of contents for any month, gave the lie to this effort to make the best of a bad bargain.

The true *raison d'être* of the Negro press can be found in the letters-to-the-editor sections, where the truth about life among the rejected can be seen in print. It is the terrible dilemma of the Negro press that, having no other model, it models itself on the white press, attempting to emulate the same effortless, sophisticated tone—a tone its subject matter renders utterly unconvincing. It is simply impossible not to sing the blues, audibly or not, when the lives lived by Negroes are so inescapably harsh and stunted. It is not the Negro press that is at fault: whatever contradictions, inanities, and political infantilism can be charged to it can be charged equally to the American press at large. It is a black man's newspaper straining for recognition and a foothold in the white man's world. Matters are not helped in the least by the fact that the white man's world, intellectually, morally, and spiritually, has the meaningless ring of a hollow drum and the odor of slow death. Within the body of the Negro press all the wars and falsehoods, all the decay and dislocation and struggle of our society is seen in relief.

The Negro press, like the Negro, becomes the scapegoat for our ills. There is no dif-

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ference, after all, between the *Amsterdam*'s handling of a murder on Lenox Avenue and the *Daily News*' coverage of a murder on Beekman Hill; nor is there any difference between the chauvinism of the two papers, except that the *News* is smug and the *Amsterdam* is desperate. Negroes live violent lives, unavoidably; a Negro press without violence is therefore not possible; and, further, in every act of violence, particularly violence against white men, Negroes feel a certain thrill of identification, a wish to have done it themselves, a feeling that old scores are being settled at last. It is no accident that Joe Louis is the most idolized man in Harlem. He has succeeded on a level that white America indicates is the only level for which it has any respect. We (Americans in general, that is) like to point to Negroes and to most of their activities with a kind of tolerant scorn; but it is ourselves we are watching, ourselves we are damning, or—condescendingly—bending to save.

I have written at perhaps excessive length about the Negro press, principally because its many critics have always seemed to me to make the irrational demand that the nation's most oppressed minority behave itself at all times with a skill and foresight no one ever expected of the late Joseph Patterson or expects now of the invincible Hearst; and I have tried to give some idea of its tone because it seems to me that it is here that the innate desperation is betrayed. As for the question of Negro advertising, which has caused so much comment, it seems to me quite logical that any minority identified by the color of its skin and the texture of its hair would eventually grow self-conscious about these attributes and avoid advertising lotions that made the hair kinkier and soaps that darkened the skin. The American ideal, after all, is that everyone should be as much alike as possible.

IT IS axiomatic that the Negro is religious, which is to say that he stands in fear of the God our ancestors gave us and before whom we all tremble yet. There are probably more churches in Harlem than in any other ghetto in this city and they are going full blast every night and some of them are filled with praying people every day. This, supposedly, exemplifies the Negro's essential simplicity and good-will; but it is actually a fairly desperate emotional business.

These churches range from the august and publicized Abyssinian Baptist Church on West 138th Street to resolutely unclassifiable lofts, basements, store-fronts, and even private dwellings. Nightly, holy roller ministers, spiritualists, self-appointed prophets and Messiahs gather their flocks together for worship and for strength through joy. And this is not, as *Cabin In The Sky* would have us believe, merely a childlike emotional release. The faith may be described as childlike, but the end it serves is often sinister. It may, indeed, "keep them happy" —a phrase carrying the inescapable inference that the way of life imposed on Negroes makes them quite actively unhappy — but also, and much more significantly, religion operates here as a complete and exquisite fantasy revenge: white people own the earth and commit all manner of abomination and injustice on it; the bad will be punished and the good rewarded, for God is not sleeping, the judgment is not far off. It does not require a spectacular degree of perception to realize that bitterness is here neither dead nor sleeping, and that the white man, believing what he wishes to believe, has misread the symbols. Quite often the Negro preacher descends to levels less abstract and leaves no doubt as to what is on his mind: the pressure of life in Harlem, the conduct of the Italian-Ethiopian war, racial injustice during the recent war, and the terrible possibility of yet another very soon. All these topics provide excellent springboards for sermons thinly coated with spirituality but designed mainly to illustrate the injustice of the white American and anticipate his certain and long overdue punishment.

HERE, too, can be seen one aspect of the Negro's ambivalent relation to the Jew. To begin with, though the traditional Christian accusation that the Jews killed Christ is neither questioned nor doubted, the term "Jew" actually operates in this initial context to include all infidels of white skin who have failed to accept the Savior. No real distinction is made: the preacher begins by accusing the Jews of having refused the light and proceeds from there to a catalog of their subsequent sins and the sufferings visited on them by a wrathful God. Though the notion of the suffering is based on the

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image of the wandering, exiled Jew, the context changes imperceptibly, to become a fairly obvious reminder of the trials of the Negro, while the sins recounted are the sins of the American republic.

At this point, the Negro identifies himself almost wholly with the Jew. The more devout Negro considers that he *is* a Jew, in bondage to a hard taskmaster and waiting for a Moses to lead him out of Egypt. The hymns, the texts, and the most favored legends of the devout Negro are all Old Testament and therefore Jewish in origin: the flight from Egypt, the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, the terrible jubilee songs of deliverance: *Lord, wasn't that hard trials, great tribulations, I'm bound to leave this land!* The covenant God made in the beginning with Abraham and which was to extend to his children and to his children's children forever is a covenant made with these latter-day exiles also: as Israel was chosen, so are they. The birth and death of Jesus, which adds a non-Judaic element, also implements this identification. It is the covenant made with Abraham again, renewed, signed with his blood. ("Before Abraham was, I am.") Here the figure of Jesus operates as the intercessor, the bridge from earth to heaven; it was Jesus who made it possible, who made salvation free to all, "to the Jew first and afterwards the Gentile." The images of the suffering Christ and the suffering Jew are wedded with the image of the suffering slave, and they are one: the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.

But if the Negro has bought his salvation with pain and the New Testament is used to prove, as it were, the validity of the transformation, it is the Old Testament that is clung to and most frequently preached from, which provides the emotional fire and anatomizes the pain of bondage; and which promises vengeance and assures the chosen of their place in Zion. The favorite text of my father, among the most earnest of ministers, was not "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," but "How can I sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

But this same identification, which Negroes, since slavery, have accepted with their mothers' milk, serves, in contemporary actuality, to implement an involved and specific bitterness. Jews in Harlem are small tradesmen, rent collectors, real estate agents, and pawnbrokers; they operate in accordance with the American business tradition of exploiting Negroes, and they are therefore identified with oppression and are hated for it. I remember meeting no Negro in the years of my growing up, in my family or out of it, who would really ever trust a Jew, and few who did not, indeed, exhibit for them the blackest contempt. On the other hand, this did not prevent their working for Jews, being utterly civil and pleasant to them, and, in most cases, contriving to delude their employers into believing that, far from harboring any dislike for Jews, they would rather work for a Jew than for anyone else. It is part of the price the Negro pays for his position in this society that, as Richard Wright points out, he is almost always acting. A Negro learns to gauge precisely what reaction the alien person facing him desires, and he produces it with disarming artlessness. The friends I had, growing up and going to work, grew more bitter every day; and, conversely, they learned to hide this bitterness and to fit into the pattern Gentile and Jew alike had fixed for them.

THE tension between Negroes and Jews contains an element not characteristic of Negro-Gentile tension, an element which accounts in some measure for the Negro's tendency to castigate the Jew verbally more often than the Gentile, and which might lead one to the conclusion that, of all white people on the face of the earth, it is the Jew whom the Negro hates most. When the Negro hates the Jew *as a Jew* he does so partly because the nation does and in much the same painful fashion that he hates himself. It is an aspect of his humiliation whittled down to a manageable size and then transferred; it is the best form the Negro has for tabulating vocally his long record of grievances against his native land.

At the same time, there is a subterranean assumption that the Jew should "know better," that he has suffered enough himself to know what suffering means. An understanding is expected of the Jew such as none but the most naive and visionary Negro has ever expected of the American Gentile. The Jew, by the nature of his own precarious position, has failed to vindicate this faith. Jews, like Negroes, must use every possible

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weapon in order to be accepted, and must try to cover their vulnerability by a frenzied adoption of the customs of the country; and the nation's treatment of Negroes is unquestionably a custom. The Jew has been taught —and, too often, accepts—the legend of Negro inferiority; and the Negro, on the other hand, has found nothing in his experience with Jews to counteract the legend of Semitic greed. Here the American white Gentile has two legends serving him at once: he has divided these minorities and he rules.

It seems unlikely that within this complicated structure any real and systematic cooperation can be achieved between Negroes and Jews. (This is in terms of the over-all social problem and is not meant to imply that individual friendships are impossible or that they are valueless when they occur.) The structure of the American commonwealth has trapped both these minorities into attitudes of perpetual hostility. They do not dare trust each other—the Jew because he feels he must climb higher on the American social ladder and has, so far as he is concerned, nothing to gain from identification with any minority even more unloved than he; while the Negro is in the even less tenable position of not really daring to trust anyone.

This applies, with qualifications and yet with almost no exceptions, even to those Negroes called progressive and "unusual." Negroes of the professional class (as distinct from professional Negroes) compete actively with the Jew in daily contact; and they wear anti-Semitism as a defiant proof of their citizenship; their positions are too shaky to allow them any real ease or any faith in anyone. They do not trust whites or each other or themselves; and, particularly and vocally, they do not trust Jews. During my brief days as a Socialist I spent more than one meeting arguing against anti-Semitism with a Negro college student, who was trying to get into civil service and was supporting herself meanwhile as a domestic. She was by no means a stupid girl, nor even a particularly narrow-minded one: she was all in favor of the millennium, even to working with Jews to achieve it; but she was not prepared ever to accept a Jew as a friend. It did no good to point out, as I did, that the exploitation of which she accused the Jews was American, not Jewish, that in fact, behind the Jewish face stood the American reality. And *my* Jewish friends in high school were not like that, I said, they had no intention of exploiting *me,* we did not hate each other. (I remember, as I spoke, being aware of doubt crawling like fog in the back of my mind.) This might all be very well, she told me, we were children now, with no need to earn a living. Wait until later, when your friends go into business and you try to get a job. You'll see!

It is this bitterness—felt alike by the inarticulate, hungry population of Harlem, by the wealthy on Sugar Hill, and by the brilliant exceptions ensconced in universities—which has defeated and promises to continue to defeat all efforts at inter-racial understanding. Oppression—the social and political optimists to the contrary—does not imbue a people with wisdom or insight or sweet charity: it breeds in them instead a constant, blinding rage. Just as a mountain of sociological investigations, committee reports, and plans for recreational centers have failed to change the face of Harlem or prevent Negro boys and girls from growing up and facing, individually and alone, the unendurable frustration of being always, everywhere, inferior—until finally the cancer attacks the mind and warps it—so there seems no hope for better Negro-Jewish relations without a change in the American pattern.

Both the Negro and the Jew are helpless; the pressure of living is too immediate and incessant to allow time for understanding. I can conceive of no Negro native to this country who has not, by the age of puberty, been irreparably scarred by the conditions of his life. All over Harlem, Negro boys and girls are growing into stunted maturity, trying desperately to find a place to stand; and the wonder is not that so many are ruined but that so many survive.[1] The Negro's outlets are desperately constricted. In his dilemma he turns first upon himself and then upon whatever most represents to him his own emasculation. Here the Jew is caught in the American crossfire. The Negro, facing a Jew, hates, at bottom, not his Jewishness but the color of his skin. It is not the Jewish tradition by which he has been betrayed but the tradition of his native land. But just as a society must have a scapegoat, so hatred must have a symbol. Georgia has the Negro and Harlem has the Jew.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

LAMENT OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IN ROME

FERDINAND GREGOROVIUS

FERDINAND GREGOROVIUS was one of the great German historians of the 19th century, and in addition a poet of no small capacity. He was born in Neidenburg in East Prussia in 1821, and studied at the University of Koenigsberg. His first important work was a study of the social elements of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* novels, published in 1849. In 1851 he published a historical work *The History of Emperor Hadrian and His Times*, and a verse tragedy, *The Death of Tiberius*. His interest in Italy and the Mediterranean in general sent him to that country in 1852; there he spent twenty-two years traveling about and studying, not returning to Germany until 1874. In 1880 he visited Greece, in 1882, Egypt, Syria, and Turkey. From then on his residence alternated between Rome and Munich; he died in 1891.

It is the general opinion that Gregorovius' greatest work is his thirteen-volume history of the City of Rome during the Middle Ages. He also wrote a history of Athens during the Middle Ages, and published many smaller studies, descriptions of travel in Italy, his Roman journals, and a volume of poems.

The poem published here below was written in 1855 while Gregorovius was working on his history of Rome. It is translated by the American poet RANDALL JARRELL and will be published shortly—together with an essay by Gregorovius, "The Ghetto and the Jews of Rome," which appeared in expanded form in his *Wande jahre in Italien* (1888-1892)—in Volume 12 of the Schocken Library. The poem appears here in its present translation by permission of Schocken Books.—ED.

VERY bitter were the sorrows
Of our fathers, who in exile
Hung their harps upon the weeping
Willows of the flat Euphrates:
But beside the Tiber's flood,
Pressed behind these stifling gratings,
We hang up our wailing's zither;
Judah's children, we—in Rome.

We last children of those slaves
The Romans led here, once, from Canaan,
In their triumph over Zion—
Those who sank waist-deep in shame;
We orphans of the Holy City
Build forever, stone on stone,
Our own pyramid of sorrow
Here above the Roman rubble.

For two thousand years we mourned
Beside this stream, whose yellow waves
Rush savagely, in wild confusion,
Past the ghetto's dreary walls;
With our fathers' wailing courage,
One in grief, we have endured:
We weep, as they have wept,
Eternally, to this same stream.

Nation after nation fell;
But we cling, like the undying
Green ivy to these ruins—cling
To Octavia's shattered halls,
The witnesses of our dishonor
When our motherland's despoiler,
When Jerusalem's destroyer
Stood to judge the seed of Judah.

Ach! for us, in narrow alleys,
In rooms the sunlight could not reach—
Not even fit to hold our anguish—
Pharaoh piled another Goshen;
And there came to gape upon us,
To mock our bitter agony
Sneering Brothers, haughty Fathers,
In their glances hate and death.

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Like the Messenger who passes
Through the streets, to chalk the marks
Of death upon the houses: Here
And here they die; so fever wanders—
Plague on plague, in their full power,
Dread and toil at every hour,
And our shame—all bound together
With the gnawing ache of hunger.

In the street outside, the laughing
Crowds surge, packed from wall to wall,
And the gay floats roll among
The masked and glittering throngs;
In its gold-embroidered silk
Each house is dressed for holiday—
From balcony and window, Joy
Strews, as spring strews, flowers, flowers.

Then the roses—ach! of Sharon
We remember: how they withered,
How the blossoms fell in clusters
From the almond-wand of Aaron.
Zion's daughter, stripped of jewels,
Maid of Rome: into the ashes
You must bow your head, in silence—
In a silence full of tears.

We think of our abandoned daughters.
We remember how the lashes
Scourged our fathers to their judgment
Through the people's mocking laughter.
We think how the blood of Judah
Stained the threshold of St. Peter's.
We see, still, the livid frightful
Glare of the flames about the stake.

Now, in the sweat of our faces,
Day after day, we sit before
Our doorsteps; and all our toil
Lengthens with our bitter zeal—
And from every hole and corner
We hunt out our rags and patches,
For with loathing hands, the world
Throws us its refuse, only.

Alas, the rags make us remember
Solomon: all earthly glory
Breaks to pieces—and at last,
Like these rags here, falls to nothing.
Oh, the bracelets that adorned you,
Zion's daughters! All are gone,
All your glittering dress is tarnished,
All that was is rags and tatters.

So we sigh, and sew the tatters
On this rubbish of the Romans,
And we think: As this has shattered,
So Rome must also—and must perish.
But we still, in mockery,
Cling fast, like the undying
Green ivy to the ruins—
For, alas, it is a ruin!

No more, from the arch of Titus,
Can the marble pictures grieve us:
Candlesticks, the Temple's tablets,
And the Jordan's holy waters;
Long ago, in filth and dust,
Thy gods, O Rome, have perished—
But Jehovah's holy emblems
Shine forth after a thousand years.

The grass springs above the rubble
Of the temple of the Father, Jove;
And down into the dust have fallen
The palaces of every Caesar:
But here, in spite of Time and Death,
To Thine everlasting glory
Thine old altars rise unbroken—
Lord of Times, of Life, Jehovah!

By the waters of the Tiber
We set up, with silent weeping,
Poorly, and with unhewn stones,
The sanctuary of Thy temple;
And we traced upon the walls
Thine emblems, Lord, that we might still
Remember, when they met our gaze,
Thy house's old magnificence.

And we sons of Abraham,
The faithful brotherhood, have met
Once more, before the holy ark,
In the Sabbath's quiet hour;
And we bear before the face
Of Elohim, the seven-fold
Light of the seven-fold lamp—
The unchanged, undying light.

Then we chorus, with the tongues
Of our fathers, to the harps,
In harmonies our sorrow sharpens,
David's psalms, still unforgotten:
Till the tears begin to flow—
And once more, from our hearts,
The pain of a thousand years
Melts into hope for the Messiah.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

THE VICTIM'S IMAGE OF THE ANTI-SEMITE

The Danger of Stereotyping the Adversary

BRUNO BETTELHEIM

ONE of the major handicaps in combatting anti-Semitism is the tendency to create in the mind's eye a single, simple, and unchanging type who represents The Anti-Semite. In this respect, Jewish thinking is often in danger of becoming as stereotyped as that of the anti-Semites, with their image of The Jew. This is unfortunate. For if we are to fight anti-Semitism effectively, the struggle must be based on the realities of human character and behavior, rather than on fictitious group stereotypes. It must concern itself with the living *individuals* on both sides of the fence, seen fully as human beings, and not as stock figures in a melodrama or a cartoon.

It is natural and inevitable that students of racial prejudice approach their subject with something less than pure objectivity. Outraged at the injustice suffered by the persecuted, they do not want him to appear in any but the best light. It seems somehow unfair to evaluate the mechanisms at work in the persecuted as soberly as those at work in the persecutor. However, it is doubtful whether in the long run such sympathetic bias is of real service to the persecuted. His main interest is that the persecution cease —and this can only be brought about by comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of persecution, a phenomenon in which persecutor and persecuted are inseparably interlocked.

A dramatic illustration of how stereotypes confuse thinking and action is provided by the experience of a man I knew in Buchenwald. As it happened, this man, whom I shall call N., was a trained psychologist, capable of observing the mental processes at work with substantial objectivity.

IT WAS at the time when the Jewish youth, Grynszpan, assassinated the German diplomat Ernst vom Rath in Paris, in November 1938. This event provided the pretext for

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BRUNO BETTELHEIM is perhaps most widely known for his extraordinary study of the adaptation of the human mind and spirit to the stresses of concentration camp life, "Behavior in Extreme Situations," which appeared originally in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. Reprinted in the magazine *Politics*, and then in pamphlet form, it evoked international comment. He here contributes another original and suggestive analysis of an important phase of the problem of anti-Semitism. Dr. Bettelheim was born and educated in Vienna, Austria, receiving his doctorate from the University of Vienna. After the annexation of Austria, he spent a year in a German concentration camp, during which time he collected some of the material drawn upon for this article on the stereotype of the anti-Semite. Dr. Bettelheim came to America in 1939. He did educational research in Chicago from 1939 to 1942 and later became head of the department of psychology at Rockford College from 1942 to 1944. In 1944 he was appointed principal of the Orthogenic School of the University of Chicago and assistant professor of education. He is at present working on the problem of education for abnormal children. Dr. Bettelheim has published articles in various professional journals.

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an even harsher regime for Jewish prisoners. One of the new orders excluded Jews from treatment at the camp clinic except when they had been injured while working for the SS. The services of the clinic were of doubtful value, since it was staffed by untrained orderlies; still, such as it was, it often represented the difference between life and death.

In the fall and winter of that year many prisoners suffered from frostbite. The Jews were worse off than the others because they were not allowed to work indoors. In many cases, chilblains led to gangrene, and amputations became necessary. So, despite the order, many Jewish prisoners tried to get their frostbite treated. They had to explain their cases to an SS private who had the power to admit or exclude them from the clinic. Even before the new rule barred them, very few Jews had succeeded in gaining admittance. All Jews were prejudged as malingerers, and suspected malingerers were sent away with a whipping.

N., too, suffered from severe frostbite, and prisoners with medical experience warned him that if his hands were not treated soon, they would have to be amputated. Convinced beforehand of the near-hopelessness of the attempt, he went one day to join the line in front of the clinic.

As the prisoners discussed among themselves the chances of receiving treatment, N. was struck by the fact that most of them had worked out in detail a plan of action which, they hoped, would get them into the clinic. Some intended to stress their service in the First World War, their wounds and decorations; others planned to impress the guard with the seriousness of their cases; still others, to invent some lie—for instance, that a Gestapo officer had ordered them to report for treatment. They tried to convince themselves that the SS man would not be clever enough to see through their stories.

When N. was asked about his plan, he truthfully replied that he had none, and that he saw little use in fabricating one. He would watch the behavior of the particular guard—especially the way he handled the other prisoners—and act upon such cues as offered themselves. A preconceived plan seemed impractical, since it took no account of the individual guard's personality and prejudices. His fellow prisoners responded in an entirely unfavorable way, even to the point of violent and insulting aggressiveness. They accused him of having some subtle plan of his own that he did not want to reveal, or else of eavesdropping on their conversation so as to steal the most plausible excuse for himself.

Most of the twenty-odd prisoners who preceded N. were turned away, though many had extreme cases of frostbite. The more they pleaded with the SS guard, the more vicious he became. Complaints of suffering amused him and stories of military service aroused his anger. From the way the guard talked and acted, it became obvious to N. that his mind was saturated with the typical Nazi stereotypes about Jews, and that attempts to sway him only put his back up. N. also observed that though he was cruel, he was not unusually sadistic for an SS man—he did no more than kick the prisoners he sent away. Moreover, he seemed somewhat more intelligent than the average of his kind.

When N.'s turn came, he told the guard that he had come not to ask for treatment, but simply to inform the clinic that he could not work with his hands in their present shape. He concluded by asking if it were possible to have his hands freed of the dead flesh hanging from them; since prisoners were not allowed to possess scissors or knives, he could not do this himself. He spoke in as matter-of-fact a tone as he was able.

The SS man answered that if that was all there was to it, he would tear the flesh away himself. He began to pull at the festering flesh, while N. successfully suppressed cries of pain. After a short time, finding it impossible to pull the flesh loose, the SS man gave up the job and ordered N. into the clinic.

MY PURPOSE in relating this incident is not to press home any trite moral

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about the Spartan virtues. Rather, it is to point out the fact that N. was successful because he broke through the cast of the traditional stereotypes, both of the oppressor and the oppressed. The SS man had been taught that all Jews were cowards and cheats who took advantage of Gentiles by deceit. He therefore expected them to try to wheedle their way into the clinic by devious means. Thus the obviously prepared stories of the prisoners confirmed his expectations. He probably realized that he was less intelligent than many of the prisoners, and the cleverness of their stories only enraged him the more. This cleverness was a threat to his ego, and he had to demonstrate that their intellectual superiority was futile. N.'s behavior in this situation did not put the SS man on the defensive through a show of superior intelligence. By making the unexpected claim that he wished to be helped to work, he forced the SS man to abandon thinking in stereotypes and to evaluate the situation in a new light. Since N.'s behavior, moreover, showed that he possessed the same "heroic" virtues professed by the SS, in rejecting N. the guard would have rejected his own scale of values.

Despite the unusual character of N.'s experience, we can learn a great deal from it about the crippling role that stereotypes can play—and not only in situations of life and death, but in many more "normal" forms of relations between Jews and anti-Semites.

The Jewish prisoners waiting in front of the camp hospital were thinking of *the* SS man in terms of a stereotype for more deeply emotional reasons than those basic to most stereotyped thinking. Stereotypes arise usually as simplifications of thought processes, serve as time savers. But the prisoners had no need to save time. They had plenty of free time, and if any subject remained perennially an interesting topic for thought, it was anti-Semitism and the SS. If anything, they thought too much about these problems and were carried away beyond reality by the sheer pressure of their thoughts—and their fears. The violent hostility displayed by the other prisoners to N.'s lack of a plan provides something of a clue to the psychological mechanism at work. The prisoners obtained a certain amount of security and emotional relief from their elaborate schemes for outwitting the SS guard (who, to them, represented all SS men). An attitude questioning the validity of their stereotyped picture of *the* SS guard terrified them, by casting doubt on the success of their carefully-laid plans. Without such plans they felt themselves nakedly exposed, without defensive armor; undernourished and exhausted as they were, they were not capable of the flexible spontaneity that non-stereotyped thinking demands.

The Jewish stereotype of the SS fulfilled other important functions, besides cushioning against anxiety. For instance, it safeguarded the Jews' self-esteem. The stereotyped picture contained, among other features, the idea that the anti-Semite was of low intelligence, had little education, and was of low social and cultural status. If these characteristics could be ascribed to all anti-Semites their accusations against the Jews could be easily dismissed. What a stupid or depraved person thinks can be disregarded. But, in fact, in the concentration camp it *could not* be disregarded. And this raised a new problem—answered by a new stereotype.

In the concentration camp the Jew was at the mercy of the SS. It is damaging to one's ego to have to humble one's self; even more pernicious to one's self-esteem is having to grovel before a person of inferior social background and of other very undesirable characteristics to boot. The Jews, therefore, found themselves confronted with a dilemma. Either the SS were at least their equals, for instance, in intelligence; or else the SS were stupid and the Jews had to see themselves as submissive to their inferiors. In order to preserve their inner self-respect, the Jews could not admit to submitting to their inferiors, especially since many of the latter's requests were unreasonable and amoral.

The Jews found a way to solve this conflict by thinking of the SS as superior not

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intellectually or morally, but superior in some other way. They thought of them as *all-powerful* adversaries *physically*, and pretended that they were no longer human beings. The Jews could admit, without losing self-respect, that they were unable to fight against super-human brutality or an all-powerful conspiracy.

At Buchenwald the personal contacts between Jews and SS men were frequent, but not of the sort to give the Jews a real understanding of their enemy. In order to understand them, the prisoners had to fall back on their own previous experience, and into the stereotype of the SS they projected most, if not all, of the unpleasant motives and characteristics they had ever known or heard of. By investing this stereotype with everything evil, they made it into an even more powerful and threatening figure—a veritable ogre—crueller, more bloodthirsty, and more wicked than the majority of even SS men ever could have been. Many SS men were indeed very callous and dangerous, and most of them were cruel, but only a small minority were actually bloodthirsty—in spite of the fact that any one of them was willing to spill blood without hesitation when he thought his superiors expected him to. But the stereotype of the SS man was always and under all circumstances that of the blood-lusting killer.

The result was that on many occasions prisoners were more terrified of a guard than was either justified or necessary. They avoided contact with the guards at any cost and by doing so ran greater risks than would have been the case had they not acted in this fashion. Some prisoners were so frightened that when ordered to present themselves to an SS guard they went into hiding. They were severely punished for this, and sometimes even shot. In most cases, the punishment would not have been so bad had they not run away.

A strange effect of the prisoners' attitude was that even those who committed suicide did not first try to kill an SS man. Such attempts might have brought punishment on the rest of the prisoners, but this reason was hardly the deterrent factor. Even in the extermination camps, non-suicidal prisoners who knew that they were going to the gas chamber still did not try to attack the Gestapo. Such an attack probably would have resulted in a less painful death for them and would have offered a chance for revenge. The prisoners certainly knew that they could not be any the worse off for assaulting a guard. The reason the victims did not dare to fight back was probably that they, like the prisoners in the concentration camp, were trapped by their own stereotype of the all-powerful SS. Their mental picture of the SS was such that even to think of fighting back became impossible; to have done so would have robbed the stereotype of its omnipotent features, which alone made submission to an "inferior" acceptable to the prisoners' egos. Their submissiveness was in line with the unreal, delusional character of the whole situation which did not permit them to fight back, because by fighting back the prisoners would have introduced reality into an unreal situation. The myth of the all-powerful SS had to be preserved.

Still another aspect of their stereotype of the SS man served to protect the ego of the Jewish prisoners. Their self-esteem, naturally, did not permit them to accept the idea that the SS really considered them subhuman, as Nazi propaganda would have it. Therefore, the prisoners interpreted their persecution as evidence of the fear in which they were held by the SS. They convinced themselves that there must have been something special about them to make the SS so afraid. Hardly ever did a Jewish prisoner realize that he was continually contradicting himself—declaring on the one hand that all Gestapo men were stupid, and, on the other, citing the fears of these allegedly stupid people as evidence of his own superiority.

The most appalling consequences of Jewish efforts to protect their self-love against the debasement inherent in persecution can be observed in some pathological developments in persons who survived the

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extermination camps. In my own clinical experience I have seen, for instance, two such cases. One of them was a girl, aged sixteen. After her liberation, she was brought to this country and placed in a nice foster home. She identified her foster mother with a Gestapo agent. She insisted that her real mother had been killed by her foster mother, so that the latter could have the girl living with her. In this case, paranoid delusions were used as a defensive mechanism for protecting the girl's ego. For many years, she had been overpowered by the Nazi world. Nevertheless, she survived. She had to explain away to herself that she had been deprived of all human prerogatives under the Nazis, that she had survived her mother, and that she was one of the few to be rescued. She tried to do this by assuming that she was a person of such tremendous importance that a plot proceeded on two continents for the privilege of possessing her as a foster child.

The other case was a ten year old boy whose extermination camp experiences took place during the ages from six to nine. The most vivid imagination is unable to paint the boy's agonies, and it is difficult to reconstruct the psychological mechanisms he used in order to survive. I asked him why he thought the SS had spared him. His answer was that he was something special, that even the SS recognized his importance for mankind, and that this was the reason he was spared. On the basis of this attitude his behavior became a problem. Its most obvious manifestation was the belief that everyone owed him immediate fulfillment of even his most extravagant desires, both because of his importance as a person, and because he had suffered so much that the world was under an obligation to compensate him for it.

THE fact that it is the Jewish individual who usually suffers more should not lead us to neglect the study of the psychological mechanisms at work in him, particularly since these mechanisms seem often to play into the hands of his adversaries. Previous studies have usually concentrated on the characteristics and mentality of anti-Semites. It has been overlooked that the psychological mechanisms used by the anti-Semites have definite effects on the psychological pattern of the Jew. Moreover, insufficient consideration has been given to the fact that the Jews react to the anti-Semitic threat with psychological mechanisms fully as questionable, in terms of their efficacy and adequacy, as those used by the anti-Semite.

Clearly the situation of the concentration camp, which I have here analyzed at some length, is an extreme one. Nevertheless, I would say that the analysis has implications even for the less drastic conflicts we face here in America. If even in the concentration camp significant differences were found among the SS, people whom it was so easy to consider inhuman robots all bound to the same world, how much more important must it be to consider individual differences in the members of a free and heterogeneous society. We can learn much from these concentration camp experiences concerning our own person-to-person relationships, which to a great extent determine group behavior, and the function and hampering effect of stereotypes in congealing this behavior into a rigid, unintelligent pattern.

Let me offer a few general suggestions derived from reflections on such situations as the above:

First, we must guard ourselves—to the highest degree possible—from treating anti-Semites as if they were stereotypes and not individuals.

Second, "outreasoning" the anti-Semite, however satisfying to one's assumed or real intellectual abilities, is a double-edged weapon. To outreason another person is an aggressive act, creating as it does frustration and disequilibrium in the intellectually overpowered individual. Cooperative thinking must take the place of "talking down."

Third, Jews should guard themselves against projecting into anti-Semites their own conflicts, no matter how plausible this may seem. The mechanism of projection is one

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of the more complex psychological devices by which the individual frees himself from conflicts by blaming others for attitudes he dislikes in himself. In this way he can reject such attitudes in *general,* which is in line with his moral obligation, and still need not rid *himself* of them. A comparatively simple example is provided by those Jews who accuse Gentiles of being envious of the Jews for their real or assumed accomplishments. Actually few Jews can help feeling envious of the freedom from restrictions which white Gentiles enjoy in our society. To face up to these restrictions would imply the realization that we are considered inferior, and this we resent. Instead many Jews transform the fact that they are considered inferior into the opposite; they think of themselves as superior, and accuse the Gentiles of being envious of the Jews, thus projecting their own envy on to others.

Fourthly, Jews should avoid creating a stereotype of the dangerous and all-powerful anti-Semite. It is a seductive escape from reality: too often it is an excuse for not taking a courageous stand against anti-Semites, or is a subtle flattery of one's own ego.

Finally, should we not develop a more flexible and intelligent approach in dealing with individuals and anti-Semitic masses? Would it not be sounder if each mass was broken down into its constituent individuals and each anti-Semite approached as a distinct individual, a case in himself, and his particular personality structure taken into account?

Jews, like all groups, have their differences from the rest of the population. But though Jews suffer from anti-Semitism, there is nothing *peculiar* about Jews except anti-Semitism. This may be difficult to accept, but it is true. And it is even more difficult for Jews to accept the fact that there is nothing peculiar about anti-Semites except their anti-Semitism.

WE HAVE become increasingly aware that many well-meant Jewish campaigns against anti-Semitism, because they are inadequately planned and unthoughtfully conducted, are likely to strengthen rather than weaken it. Often, the methods used are based upon the stereotype of the anti-Semite, instead of a specific number of living, individual persons. They are "shot-gun" prescriptions. As a result, for some recipients the propaganda is too crude and simple, for others too sophisticated; in either case, the resistance of the anti-Semite is raised rather than lowered. Where the person finds the propaganda too crude, he feels that his intelligence has been under-rated; where he finds it too highbrow, he resents what he thinks is a calculated demonstration of his mental deficiencies. It must be stressed that nothing is so vexing as to be outreasoned. And to approach people with anti-Semitic tendencies on the benevolent assumption that they have fallen for anti-Semitic propaganda is—even if true—only to insult their native American shrewdness by implying that they have been made "suckers."

The irrationality and essential unwisdom of stereotyping the anti-Semite finds some of its most illuminating examples in anti-fascist and counter-anti-Semitic films made in the war period and after. It was presumed to be bold and realistic to depict the fascist or the anti-Semite as of colossal physical prowess, cunning, and will. The Nazi in Alfred Hitchcock's film *Lifeboat* was a flagrant instance, and not at all untypical. The murderer in *Crossfire* is cast in much the same mold; a powerful, confident, dominating personality among hesitant mediocrities. To stereotype the anti-Semite in this way may be understandable under the horrible pressures of the concentration camp; to do so in the United States, where both public sentiment and legal machinery are overwhelmingly against fascist violence, is difficult to condone. Moreover, it runs the risk of providing an escapist alibi for defeat in advance of struggle, and shows more interest in soothing the ego of the victim by exaggerating the danger and orally vilifying the supposedly invulnerable foe than in undertaking the less "heroic" choice of facing the facts of the particular situation at hand, analyzing it soberly, and devising precise and effective, though perhaps undramatic, means

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to meet it concretely. Its end results are the emotional satisfaction of self-pity, and a flight from reality, not to speak of the encouragement given to the anti-Semites by the flattering strength of the conventional stereotype. Propaganda, however well-intentioned, that poses the superhuman brute against the eternally noble weakling will too often create a "boomerang" effect on the public mind.

And we might do well to review and analyze the way in which Jewish political journalism portrays anti-Semitic figures; usually they are without discrimination simply monsters. And often governmental figures who are not anti-Semitic at all, but simply supporters of measures politically counter to Jewish demands, appear in the conventional stereotype. To a man they are all Hitlers.

IF ANTI-SEMITISM is to be resolved effectively, the struggle must not be marshalled as a clash of stereotypes. Pitting one delusional system against its delusional counter-reaction precludes genuine constructive action and change. It only creates a vicious circle. This clash of stereotypes has already exaggerated, made more dangerous, and fixed in a more permanent mold, the excessive and inflamed nationalisms that obsess the modern world. In the clash of stereotypes—whether Russian and American, or Jewish and Arab —the real people disappear, and their place is taken by figments of the imagination; ideologies, hypnotized by the very images they have contrived, engage in merciless dispute. Actual experience with the variety of human beings, which alone can guide appropriate behavior, is explained away or ignored. It is only when people can freely communicate with each other—as three-dimensional individuals—that understanding and trust can be secure. Any program that overlooks the individual in favor of the mass only helps to solidify prior prejudices and hardens the lines of conflict.

Anti-Semitism, we must realize, is basically an ego-defense against something that the person feels is alien to him. Only when the anti-Semite has accepted the Jew as a human being essentially like himself will he have reached the point where he can respond positively to factual information about Jews. As long as he goes on believing that Jews are a peculiar *type,* cunning in a way that he is not, all the factual evidence in the world will be interpreted as but another demonstration of how they try to outwit him.

Each step taken against anti-Semitism should, therefore, be carefully evaluated in terms of the specific situation and particular individuals involved. It must never rest upon a gross image of the anti-Semite as one bloated with ignorance and sadism. Jews must surrender their stereotype of the anti-Semite as a person too inferior to take pains with, too powerful to be fought against, or too radically corrupt to be approached as a normal human being. Anti-Semites are, for the most part, average people—like Jews. And that is most encouraging.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Rebecca West on Fascism

To the Editor of Commentary:

Thank you for your courtesy in sending me a copy of the article by George Lichtheim ["England: The Citizen on Trial"] in your January issue. You invite my comments, and therefore I am delighted to inform you that the article appears to me to be a valueless morsel of Marxist baby-talk, and so far as it concerns me is impudent nonsense which is not even original. It is an echo of the rubbish which is at present handed out concerning me in Communist circles, because I have pointed out that in the highly artificial fascist-Communist clashes in North and East London the Communists are shamelessly exploiting the Jews, particularly the Jewish adolescents, in an attempt to create a state of civil disorder which is embarrassing to the Labor government.

Let me deal with one point at length. Mr. Lichtheim pours scorn on me because I complained that the din set up by the fascists "makes the enjoyment of the English Sunday impossible for the quiet householder and his family, and in particular by the use of loudspeakers," and remarks with a sneer that this shows my blindness to the fact that the quiet householder "may also be concerned in some manner with the public good." That I suggest that the use of the loudspeaker should be banned is put forward as proof of my petty superficiality.

It happens that I was asked by the *Evening Standard* to go down to North and East London and investigate the fascist agitation and its effect on anti-Semitism. I did this to the best of my ability, granted my prepossessions, which are anti-fascist and pro-Semitic. Obviously the first thing I had to do was to listen to what the people said.

They all complained, Jew and Gentile alike, that these fascist and Communist meetings were making their lives intolerable. These meetings are held in thickly populated areas, in small squares opening off streets, or in some of the broader streets, and where a loudspeaker is used the bellowing of the orators can be heard in every room in every house in an area of some hundreds of square yards. They last from two to four hours, and are sometimes not over by eleven o'clock at night. Again and again, whether they knew that I was writing for the press or not, the householders complained to me that while the meetings were on it was impossible for a sick person or a child to sleep, that old people were disturbed and distressed by the incessant racket, and that it was almost impossible to prevent children running out to see what the noise was. The Jewish population were most emphatic in their disgust with the situation, and this was natural enough, considering that the words which were being bawled into their unwilling ears often conveyed insults against themselves.

Is it the opinion of you and your readers that I should have suppressed this complaint in order, as Mr. Lichtheim would have preferred, to "discuss the problem of fascist disintegration in a liberal democracy"?

For the rest, I will try to deal more briefly with Mr. Lichtheim's accusations against me, which as I say are current Communist chat. I have great pleasure in informing you that his statement that "fascists who, openly or by implications, incite audiences to follow the Nazi example, and Jews who indulge in abusive and frequently stupid and ineffective heckling fall alike under Miss West's displeasure," is complete and absolute nonsense.

Anyone who says that I have ever put fascists and Jews on a level is telling a flat lie.

I find quite revolting in its indecency and attempt to throw mud at an opponent from behind a wall Mr. Lichtheim's assertion that my statement that "we have all been persecuted by the powers of darkness" reveals "a remarkable failure to understand what the six million dead have meant for the Jewish consciousness in the modern world." When I wrote that sentence I was thinking of many instances, of which I will give only one. A young boy to whom I talked in North London, who was strongly attracted by fascism, was the son of a manufacturer in a small way of business who, with the boy's grandmother, sister, and brother, was killed by a rocket. The boy and his mother, the only survivors of the family, were buried for some hours with the dead bodies, and when they were taken to hospital began a series of operations, which lasted nearly a year, at the end of

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which the mother had had both legs amputated and the boy had had one. His father's business had been destroyed; his only uncle was killed abroad, and he had no relative to guide him into the labor market. Do you wonder that the boy was shattered and wild and had a sense of insecurity which left him credulous and gullible? Why does my mention of such cases as this show a failure to realize what the Jewish people have undergone? Could any honest critic think that it did?

One last word. Mr. Lichtheim, wrong about everything, talks of "the liberal-conservative upper class she represents," meaning me. This is an explicable description if Mr. Lichtheim uses the deliberately slanderous vocabulary of the Communists. To all others it is not. I have nothing to do with the Liberal or Conservative parties, and little enough with the upper classes. I have never voted except for the Labor party. It occurs to me that Mr. Lichtheim, if his mistake is honest, has been misled by the fact that my articles appear in the *Evening Standard,* which is Tory-owned. But its feature columns are policy-free. I have no doubt that Mr. Lichtheim, in his pervasive ignorance, will sneer at this assertion, but it is proven by the fact that David Low, the Labor party cartoonist, has for many years worked for the *Evening Standard.*

REBECCA WEST

Buckinghamshire, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Miss West seems more concerned to vent her irritation at a critic than to discuss the subject under review. In doing so she comes perilously close to misrepresentation of a rather serious sort. Leaving aside various forms of personal abuse, the substance of her complaint amounts to this: that my article represents "an echo of the rubbish which is at present handed out . . . in Communist circles," and that it gives a false picture of her position.

Both charges are best answered by drawing the attention of your readers to a piece of evidence which Miss West did not care to mention: On November 14th last, the *Tribune,* a well-known Labor party weekly of strong anti-Communist tendencies (with whose editorial line I happen to be in full agreement) published a lengthy and detailed criticism of Miss West's articles in the *Evening Standard,* in the form of an "Open Letter" not signed by name and most certainly not written by myself.

The chief grounds of criticism were almost identical with those I had chosen, i.e. Miss West's disregard of all forms of fascism except the most plebeian one, and her tendency to place Jews and fascists on the same level, politically and morally if not individually. To this charge, which I regard as fully justified, Miss West replied in a letter displaying marked irritation, but of course refrained from hurling the damaging epithet "Communist." Since the *Tribune* is sharply anti-Russian and intensely disliked by the Communists, the accusation would have recoiled upon herself and made her ridiculous.

"Anyone who says that I have ever put fascists and Jews on a level is telling a flat lie," says Miss West. Well, the charge was made by the *Tribune,* and I am quite willing to repeat it. But I must make it plain that I am not concerned with Miss West's good intentions. The whole point of the argument lies in her blindness to the mechanics of fascist disintegration operating on *all* levels of society, including her own. In this context Miss West's statement that she supports the Labor party is hardly more than another irrelevancy. I have no doubt she is strong for civil liberties, but so are the Liberals and most of the Tories. In the Labor party, of which I happen also to be a supporter, the discussion as to the best means of combating fascism proceeds on lines familiar to anyone in touch with Continental developments. Among socialists at any rate it is a commonplace that the processes constricting the formerly ample "living space" of the upper classes in society are a particularly important agency of fascist disintegration on a social level where people neither "bellow" nor throw stones at their neighbors. To Miss West this may seem a novel and daring point of view to adopt, but it is not peculiar to Communists and nothing except further mental confusion is gained by flinging the epithet "Communist" indiscriminately at anyone who employs a political vocabulary more up to date than hers.

Since I do not move in Communist circles, I have no means of knowing whether my criticism of Miss West's spirited but ill-directed series of articles overlaps at some points with what has been said or written by Communists. . . . But the point seems of no importance.

As to the subject of better methods of combating Mosleyism, I am satisfied that I did not caricature Miss West's view when I said that it seemed to be representative of upper-class concern for order and decorum rather than of anything in the nature of principled opposition to fascism. What irritated me most about her articles—and the same effect was produced on several acquaintances—was their tendency to build up in the minds of the readers a picture of two noisy but unrepresentative gangs—one Gentile-fascist, the other Jewish-Communist—combining to desecrate the English Sunday. This initial twist, coupled with certain minor misplacements of emphasis, leads to a generalized "plague o' both your houses" attitude which

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is the very reverse of a truly democratic position. It amounts in fact, whatever Miss West many say to the contrary, to "placing Jews and fascists on the same level." It is true that while Miss West habitually, and misleadingly, refers to Communists as "Red Fascists," she does not indicate in so many words that Jews *as Jews* are as much to blame for the outrageous situation in the East End as the Mosleyite hordes who invade that neighborhood weekly under the benevolent protection of the police authorities. The absurd argument over loudspeakers has nothing whatever to do with the matter. I cannot understand why Miss West imagines that I am fond of these contraptions. The point is that to demand a general ban on loudspeakers instead of a specific ban on Mosleyite provocations is utterly absurd, and suggests, among other things, a rooted inability to perceive that politically and morally the demonstrators and though they may be equally noisy and repellent though they may be equally noisy and repelant as individuals. Miss West must be aware that numerous Labor members of Parliament have witnessed these weekly events and have come away with the strong impression that the police are favorable to the Mosleyites and that but for police protection—often amounting to drastic action against hecklers—these demonstrations could not take place. She must equally be aware that the Trade Union Congress has asked the Home Secretary to intervene, and that several of the Labor party's legal advisers are of the opinion that there exist sufficient legal grounds to forbid these incitements to riot. She must finally be aware—since her attention was drawn to it by the *Tribune* article already referred to—that Mosley can count on a certain amount of tacit support among the educated and the well-to-do, and that any attempt to interfere with the activities of his gangs is likely to be resisted by the Conservative party in the name, if you please, of political liberty. Although a ban on these activities would manifestly not end the matter, it is the very least that anyone really concerned with civil liberties must demand.

For the Labor party, which Miss West supports, there is an additional obligation: to counter fascist propaganda not by ignoring it, but by educating the public as to its meaning and by providing social centers where slum youth can learn the elements of citizenship. This is something quite different from reliance on domestic life and Sunday quiet, and I do not expect Miss West to agree with me, but I must insist that it represents the outlook of socialists in the Labor party, though it may be new to Miss West. In conclusion, Sir, may I say that I regret that your readers have been presented with unduly lengthy letters on a subject on which there ought to be no difference in principle among people who support democracy, whether they are liberals like Miss West—I cannot think of her in any other terms—or socialists like myself.

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

London, England

Labor and Taft-Hartley

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I regret that I have not had earlier opportunity to comment on "Taft-Hartley and Labor's Perspective," by A. H. Raskin, in the November COMMENTARY.

Mr. Raskin's summary of the effects of the Taft-Hartley law on our economic system is in my opinion very commendable. The Taft-Hartley act certainly contributes to a strong feeling of insecurity among labor, and that is not good for our democratic way of life.

But I regret that Mr. Raskin sees fit to describe as "negative" the attitude of labor toward the demands of the NAM for a change in the Wagner act. In the first place, his characterization is not true, and in the second place, he seems to have become a victim of NAM's sly propaganda. I appeared before the House Labor Committee on February 25, 1947 and before the Senate Labor Committee on March 13, 1947, and offered amendments to the Wagner act and the Railway Labor act, some of which were designed to deal with the secondary boycott and jurisdictional strikes; but to imply that because labor would not volunteer extensive changes in the Wagner act it assumed an "ear-stuffing" attitude is an injustice to the American labor movement. After all, the Wagner act did nothing more than give legal protection to American workers in their right to exercise the same democratic privilege as employers have long exercised, namely, the right to organize and to join an organization of their choice. This was a very mild statutory definition of workers' most fundamental rights, and to assume that labor should offer some "amendments" to these rights is to assume that labor should fall for the NAM propaganda. . . .

Mr. Raskin correctly diagnoses the position of big business in not using too enthusiastically the club over labor afforded by the Taft-Hartley act until after the November 1948 elections. That is one grave danger, as I see it, in the Act. Because employers will await an opportune moment to strike a crushing blow at organized labor in America, the masses of the people may become apathetic over this fascist law.

The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen is presently engaged in negotiations to renew a contract with an employer operating inter-city

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buses. . . . The Brotherhood officers have not stultified themselves by signing affidavits to the effect that they are not Communists or do not believe in the overthrow of our government. I might add that neither have they signed any affidavits declaring that they are not horse thieves. If we carry into our democracy the principle of making innocent men sign public affidavits to the effect that they are not lacking in patriotism or are not criminals, then it seems to me we are wandering far astray from what has always been regarded as fundamental rights for American citizens. . . . Because we have not "so qualified," the bus employer with whom we have held contractual relations for years and have had a closed shop, is insisting upon a union security clause. . . . He is insisting upon this clause because he knows that in order to have such a clause in the contract, it is necessary for the National Labor Relations Board to hold an election, and since we are not "qualified," the National Labor Relations Board will not hold such an election with respect to our members.

This is a good illustration of how exasperating employers really can become under the Taft-Hartley act when they insist on a union security clause not because they want security for the union, but because they know that such a clause cannot be established under the law by an "unqualified" union. The democratic choice of the workers is no longer the test by which a union is a qualified bargaining agent. In this instance the un-American Taft-Hartley Act disrupted relationships between the employer and a union which have existed on a closed shop basis for many years.

The only part of Mr. Raskin's article which seems to be "objective," as he is described in the footnote to the article, are his remarks regarding the inevitability of strife that is inherent in the Taft-Hartley act.

A. F. Whitney, President
Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen
Cleveland, Ohio

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Whitney's letter is a perfect illustration of the kind of self-righteousness that helped make the Taft-Hartley law possible. This tendency to blame all dissatisfaction with labor on the NAM is all the more tragic when one remembers the impact on public thinking of the two-day strike by Mr. Whitney's trainmen in May 1946, to say nothing of his threat to spend all the union's money to defeat President Truman (an ambition since abandoned).

In his congressional testimony last winter, Mr. Whitney took the same negative tack as most of his colleagues. When he stopped saying "no," it was usually for the purpose of proposing an increase in labor's powers under existing laws. How completely he and other labor leaders miscalculated the situation was demonstrated by the legislation Congress finally adopted. I think, as I have said repeatedly, that it was bad legislation and I am hopeful that some of its most inequitable provisions, including the non-Communist oath requirement, will be held invalid by the courts. But I do not think that Mr. Whitney and those who have refused to comply with the law are doing much to make clear its shortcomings. No law is designed to operate equitably for those who defy it.

A. H. Raskin

New York City

Poland: Black, Gray, or White?

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Hal Lehrman's review of my book on Poland, *Between Fear and Hope,* in the January issue of Commentary, represents such a consistent falsification of my views that . . . I feel impelled to correct the misleading impression he might have given your readers.

It is amusing to read Mr. Lehrman's charge that my purpose was "to prove that Poland is a case of black and white, with purity residing entirely in the camp of the regime." In support of this accusation he is unable to quote a single statement from my book. He does not even notice that in the same paragraph he blithely quotes a long list of criticisms I formulated against the present Polish regime.

Giving free rein to his distortions, Mr. Lehrman writes that when it comes to the treatment of the Jews I make "all Poles out to be scoundrels." Such an accusation would be natural in the mouth of a Polish anti-Semite. Actually, while my book does not minimize Polish crimes against Jews, it also refers in several passages to Polish Gentiles who sacrificed their lives in defense of humanity. For instance, on page 77 I state that "extraordinary heroism was displayed not only by left-wing workers, but sometimes by Catholics. . . . Pious nuns have saved hundreds of Jewish children by concealing them in convent cells."

Intimating that he has inside knowledge, Mr. Lehrman deplores that in my book there is no hint that "Poland's real government is a secret inner council headed by a Soviet general." I confess that, unlike my reviewer, who apparently has access to the inner circles of the Polish regime, I have no knowledge about that mysterious Soviet general. I describe the situation in more objective terms, on page 297, where I state that "Poland is in Russia's sphere of influence and the Russians keep a watchful eye on her internal policies." But Mr. Lehrman is

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not concerned with the facts I adduce, he thinks I should have written another book, of a kind he could easily have written himself without leaving his desk in New York and without having to correct any of his preconceptions.

Mr. Lehrman's distortions cannot be imputed to any lack of clarity on my part. Every other reviewer of my book stressed its objective, unbiased approach. . . .

Because I did not indulge in exaggerations and witch hunting, because instead of inventing mystery stories I confined myself to facts, and because I did not extenuate the crimes of the Kielce pogromists on the ground that they opposed the Soviet-sponsored Polish regime, Mr. Lehrman declares that my book is "irrelevant, immaterial and incompetent." . . . But it should be clear from the foregoing examples that, contrary to my reviewer's allegations, I was not blind to the negative aspects of life in Poland under the new regime. Mr. Lehrman simply cannot forgive me for having also noted the positive aspects.

It is indeed his review that is confused, irrelevant, immaterial, and incompetent. But most shocking is the tone of his review. I am perhaps over sensitive but I think it is inadmissible for a writer in a Jewish magazine to refer to the tragedy of Kielce as an "unusual opportunity" for a Jewish reporter, and to the extermination of Polish Jewry as "an easy theme to draw emotions."

S. L. SHNEIDERMAN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

My sinister review, on second reading, seems like a Quaker tract when measured against Mr. Shneiderman's passionate prose.

1. Far from failing to "notice" his "list of criticisms" of the regime, I searched through Mr. Shneiderman's book and patiently catalogued them. My point was—and still is—that he minimized or ignored their significance. The list, moreover, is exclusively about the Jewish problem. Every other injustice in Poland is apparently not worth mentioning.

2. My full statement was: "When he [Mr. Shneiderman] talks, with justified bitterness, about treatment of the Jews, he makes all Poles out to be scoundrels. But when he talks about the wonderful government, all Poles somehow become enthusiastic comrades and noble fellows—except the opposition." I am now willing to say he only makes 98 per cent out to be scoundrels. The alchemy by which they become virtuous as soon as they see the Moscow light remains unexplained.

3. If Mr. Shneiderman *really* doesn't know about that "mysterious" Soviet general, then he must indeed have wandered around the new democratic Poland with his eyes securely shut. Perhaps he also failed to notice the frequency of Russian officers in the "Polish" Army. Under the circumstances, to say that "the Russians keep a watchful eye" on the Poles is about as objective and illuminating as saying that the gunman kept a watchful eye on his victim. As for the question of leaving one's desk and correcting one's preconceived ideas: In 1945 I probably would have believed Mr. Shneiderman's report on Poland; unhappily for him and me, I then left my "desk in New York" and went to Russia's Europe, spent eighteen months checking my preconceptions, and finally threw them away.

4. I already knew that some reviewers (not "every other reviewer") had called the book objective. If Mr. Shneiderman believes the majority is always right, he will simply have to give up the minority regime in Warsaw.

5. I said that the book is "irrelevant, etc." not on the plight of the Jews but on the plight of Poland. The "negative side" of life in Poland today includes official indifference to (and provocation of) anti-Semitism, secret police, phoney elections, slave labor camps, and all the other joys of Soviet-inspired democracy. To these Mr. Shneiderman, who rightly mourns—as we all do—for the Jewish agony, is deaf, dumb, and blind. If I had been in his boots at Kielce, I would have felt the tragedy as deeply as he. But I would also have made an attempt to find out who was responsible, not contented myself with the routine black-white formula of the "progressive" journalist.

Characteristically, Mr. Shneiderman tip-toes around the basic arguments and leaps at phrases torn out of context. This is the familiar technique of the fellow-traveller—and Mr. Shneiderman's answer (not to speak of his book) certainly follows the pattern.

HAL LEHRMAN

New York City

On "Commentary"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

What I like most about COMMENTARY is its cosmopolitan character. One gets the feeling that its editors and contributors are sensitive to the fact that Jewish culture is integral to American and to world culture. As a Gentile who entertains a deep respect for the Jewish contribution to both American and world culture, I find better insights in COMMENTARY than in any other journal of its type.

EDUARD C. LINDEMAN

New York School of Social Work
New York City

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Case of Axman Teetjens

THE AXE OF WANDSBEK. By ARNOLD ZWEIG. New York, Viking, 1947. 428 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE J. BECKER

TWENTY years ago, when Arnold Zweig began the tetralogy which he brought to completion before the second World War, the evil loose in the world was still of such dimensions that it could be apprehended and encompassed by the novelist's art. Or, at least, so it seemed. In *The Case of Sergeant Grischa,* Zweig could make the story of one man into an attack on the injustices inflicted by all special privilege everywhere, just as Franz Werfel in *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* could use a single minor episode to underline for all times the evil of racial intolerance and the heroism of the outcast. In both these instances, a story of humble people participating in relatively humble events is used to illumine a whole area of experience.

Perhaps it is the measure of our time that the evil we have seen in the past fifteen years or so defies description or simple parable. A Kafka and a Joyce found their separate ways of writing about the fate of man as an individual —but that was long ago, and in any case inadequate to reflect the many-faceted travail of our society and culture during and after the Second World War. So when Arnold Zweig in his new novel attempts to apply old techniques to the most gigantic post-mortem that has ever engaged the attention of a writer, it is not surprising that the narrative falters, character becomes stereotyped, and impact is cushioned in intricacy.

The Axe of Wandsbek has much to say that is wise; it is thoroughly honest; it brings into focus a number of commonplaces about the social psychology of the Nazi era which no longer seem commonplaces in Zweig's hands. To many it will bring understanding, if not emotional experience. But it fails of ultimate diagnosis and effect. Zweig is aware that he has to deal with forms as terrifying as ever tenanted the minds of a Macbeth or an Othello, that the convulsions of *Hamlet* and of *Lear* are but petty writhings alongside those of the European continent since 1933. But, like most of us, he remains the prisoner of old and inadequate ways of feeling and expression, and he cannot evoke the pity and fear that his theme demands. Rather, he offers analysis and perspective which may enable him or others at a later date to disengage the essential and to exhibit it in stark power.

WHAT he has done is to seize upon an unimportant and local action as the focal point of his novel.

The scene is Hamburg, a city remote from the main intrigues of the Nazi party and heir to a vigorous social philosophy deriving from revolutionary and republican days. The time is from September 1937 to September 1938, a year of decision between the consolidation of party power and the headlong adventure into chaos.

The people in the novel have no historical importance; they are the fellow townsmen of any of us, confronted by forces they did not anticipate and cannot understand. The events might have occurred anywhere—in Hankow, in Cadiz, in Lyon, in Buenos Aires—wherever the processes of justice have been prostituted to the interests of a single group, wherever the essential dignity of man has been forgotten.

Albert Teetjens, master butcher, a "little man" of Wandsbek, a Hamburg suburb, finds that his business is dying for the glory of the greater Reich, a victim of the priority of guns over butter, and more particularly of the consolidation of business enterprises. He appeals to Hans Footh, a comrade of World War I days, who has joined the bandwagon of business consolidation and plunder of the Jews and is prospering in the oil tanker trade. But for Albert Teetjens there is no juicy government or party contract, only a two thousand mark fee for acting as headsman at the execution

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of four political prisoners. Though the identity of the headsman is at first concealed, he is found out, boycotted, and ruined within a few months.

Before the end he has become disillusioned about the regime's promises to the little man. Having no principles, he has no strength. The closest he ever comes to understanding his lot is when he wonders why he did swing the fatal axe. When his wife says that he did it because it was the Fuehrer's will, he replies, "But why do people like us need a Fuehrer?" And he can find his answer only in custom, in the fact that people like him have always shouted for someone to look up to and to follow. Hopelessly cut off from any meaningful participation in life, he and his wife finally commit suicide, victims of the Moloch they have helped to create.

OTHER attitudes toward the Nazi evil are explored in equal detail. There is Colonel Lintze, who boasts that the whole Hitler regime is nothing more than an effort of the military to regain for themselves and Germany the power of which they were divested in 1918. He, too, in time sees more clearly the monster he has created, engages vaguely in conspiracy, but can do nothing effective. Most interesting of all are two intellectuals, Dr. Kaete Neumeier, a physician, and Dr. Koldewey, commandant of the prison where the execution takes place.

Koldewey had watched "the process by which the political world was becoming increasingly coarsened and dull and vulgar" with the detachment of the 18th-century patrician, feeling that any kind of violent opposition was vulgar and short-sighted. But he and Kaete are finally awakened to the need to do something against the monster that bestrides the land. Yet all the characters are as if under a spell. In the face of all the clear portents of disaster, none of them really sees where events are leading, none is really ready to accept responsibility.

It is here that we feel most keenly the incapacity of Zweig's method. He arouses only irritation at his characters, not a sense of the tragedy of a nation and an epoch. The materials are there, yet they never coalesce into a shape that will inhabit the mind in meaning and power. The overwhelming drama of our age still awaits the novelist who will forge the instrument adequate in precision and scope to do it justice.

Franz Werfel's Poetry

GEDICHTE AUS DEN JAHREN 1908-1945. By FRANZ WERFEL. Privately printed by the Pacific Press, Los Angeles, 1946. Distributed by MARY S. ROSENBERG, New York. 167 pp. Cloth, $5.00. Half-leather, $6.00.

Reviewed by ERICH KAHLER

FRANZ WERFEL was a bad author and a great poet. This is rare enough in itself. But even rarer is the deep connection between the two.

His novels and plays show neither the spontaneous purity of a genuinely naive nature nor the achieved purity of an artistic conscience. They are full of guilt and betrayal. Certainly they do not belie the effervescent talent that he possessed, the impulse and joy of the born story-teller. Just as in his social intercourse, there are moments in Werfel's epical and dramatic works when he relaxed completely and gave himself up to his flowing gift, when he forgot and lost himself, and therefore found himself, exposing the childlike basis of his nature and its prankish exuberance. At such moments he told his story well—impulsively, wittily, colorfully, even dramatically. On the whole, however, he remained trapped between the spontaneity of the involuntary personal statement and the mental exertion of the work of art.

These books of his are full of effort, but it is a false and shallow effort, never turned exclusively toward the object, never in any higher sense disinterested; it is an effort not so much toward a constantly more intensive truth as toward extensive and often cheap effects. Werfel wrote historical novels and plays by preference. But whereas every genuine artist feels costumes to be a burden rather than a vehicle, and tends to get rid of the imaginative associations called up by the names and scenic effects of a costume play in order to clear the way for a profounder accuracy, Werfel was much more inclined to accept the easy help offered by the scenic clichés of the theater. In the style of his characters, situations, and dialogue, all too much of that exaggeration, overheating, over-lubrication, and anticipation of effect is to be discerned which constitutes the very nature of showmanship. And even those spots where he attained to a true contact with with life were often spoiled by the emphatic and sentimental coloring given to the whole

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In the persons and experiences of, say, Bernadette and Verdi, Werfel doubtless penetrated to the truth in all its sharpness and fathomlessness—but what good was it? These characters stand between theater decoration and a minor cast of dignitaries, contrasts, and conflicts that are probably entertaining, gripping, and, on the level of everyday appearances, even striking: they carry us along while we read and even stir up all sorts of problems inside us; yet they leave behind a feeling of shame, as if after deceptive, wasteful pleasures. This is because of the bad taste and the bad conscience with which these books are written.

All one has to do is read the unhappy prefaces to the Verdi and Bernadette books to see the primal sin of the Werfel opus in its full clarity. The preface to *Verdi* says that the author's years of hesitation before putting this novel down in writing were caused by the hero of the story himself: "He, who was in terror of the public, who called newspapers the scourges of our time, who branded the posthumous publication of letters an injustice, who (according to Rossini) ruined all his opportunities in Paris because he disdained to make calls, the man who lived inaccessibly upon his estate—should he not refuse to figure as the principal personage in a novel?" This explanation is either untrue in general or an affectation. Verdi, one of the most famous and most performed composers of the 19th century, belonged irretrievably to the public; biographies of him were published, memoirs concerning him, and his letters—Werfel himself put them out in German. And whether or not Werfel wrote a novel about him could hardly have further effect upon such a public existence. If it is granted, however, that one might have such an exaggerated feeling of delicacy toward a much venerated individual, then this feeling of delicacy ought to prevent one from making a fuss in a preface about the fact that one cannot in the end surrender to it.

Even worse is the announcement of that pledge which, according to another preface, moved Werfel to write *The Song of Bernadette*. A pledge is a very serious private circumstance and anyone who took it as seriously as it deserved would feel some natural shyness about making it the sensational lead-horse of a new books.

Statements such as these are enough of themselves to demonstrate what ruins the whole style of Werfel's stories: a lack of that ultimate honor and honesty which are the premise of genuine artistic devotion.

I do not say all this in order to denigrate Werfel; I say it in order to do him the honor of applying that same high standard which he himself set in another part of his work, the only valid and pure part: that is, his poetry. How, in actual fact, could one ever evaluate the greatness of his poetry without seeing at the same time the inadequacy of his activity as an author? Indeed it is from this very inadequacy—and that, above all, is why I must expose it—that the greatness arises. Not only is Werfel's prose degraded by his poetry; in a certain sense the prose, in its turn, conditions his poetry: Werfel knew about his profound failures, knew about the badness with which he handled his great gifts, knew about his weaknesses, his lies, his sins. And the settling of accounts with himself, the ordeal he experienced in the painful recognition of his defections—it is this, exactly this, that is the source of his genuine creation. In many of his poems, the greatest, he pursued the experience of his personal defection to the very bottom of the human condition, to the point of a Job-like complaint and accusation lifted up on the part of the mortal creature.

The poems reveal his inner history: that lovable childlike quality, that openness to the world, that "friendship with the world" which lay in the depths of his nature, and the weaknesses, the abandonment to all temptations that are connected with these qualities; the urge towards union, towards communication, towards mutual effect, and the inevitable experience of the bounds separating person from person, of the impotence of speech, of being along with oneself. The best pieces in the book at hand—in which Werfel, this time with a sure and strict glance, really collected his finest poems—are direct personal statements, save for a few exceptions such as the masterly poem "Der Dirigent." And the salient motifs are all connected with the experience of the self. Childhood, with its warm, all-enveloping background of home, plays a mighty role; the poet's whole life is penetrated by it. Completely original also is Werfel's urge towards the Other, his extension of himself through the world, his dispersion and his loss of himself in the world. And then there comes abruptly the breaking off, the rejection and the withdrawal back into himself, the struggle for a human hold on waking reality, and the sweetness of self-surrender:

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sleep, sleeplessness with its specters of guilt, sickness—not only personal, acute sickness, but also the lifelong one, the "sickness unto death." It is only a step from the child to death. What is lacking is the man that he never became, and just this is the most affecting of all traits in this person.

Language does not deceive and does not let itself be deceived. Let one compare the style of Werfel's epic works with that of his poetry. They are hardly reconcilable. The prose is careless and flat and often suffers from inexcusable slips. The lyric poetry is concise and specific, firm and fast, and of a new and deep power of illumination. The prose is second-hand, it was faded and obsolete from the first day he began writing it. The lyric poetry will always retain its original freshness: i.e., the sphere of emotions it won by and for itself.

These differences spring from the fact that the public is absent from Werfel's lyrics. The individual, the suffering individual, is alone with himself—which is the precondition of all true poetry. The individual digs down into himself and comes up with new content that has never yet seen the light of day, content drawn from strata of the soul where that which is most intensely personal goes over into the universally human. Because he is alone with himself, the poet is honest. And because he is altogether honest, his great powers of expression can develop freely. Only new content, just discovered for the first time, can create a new, completely direct language. Aside from slight reminiscences of the early Rilke—and these only in respect to melody—no foreign influences are to be detected even in Werfel's youthful poetry.

Werfel did not see and did not suspect, let alone penetrate with his thinking consciousness, the epic conflicts of our time, the problems of social life or of the interaction of individual and society, of the horizontal world, so to speak—in any case he was a bad thinker by and large. But what did preoccupy him in his innermost were the vertical problems, the depth problems of the self, the frailty, yes, the brittleness of personal existence, the encroachment of death, the transcendence of memory, the limits of speech. Problems, spiritual urgencies such as are awake today in all serious minds—these too occupied him in his innermost, and he gave them a metaphorical form that in its spectral buffoonery and in its tendency to allegory is often reminiscent of the lyric poetry of the German baroque period. Those most personal and most moving poems in which Werfel surrendered himself completely to the extremest remorse, and from this remorse won the truest poetic momentum, come very close in fact to the outpourings of sin and repentance of the baroque poets: thus the "Gestammel in elfter Stunde" ("Stammering at the Eleventh Hour"). It is here we find the core of Werfel's poetry:

Ich muss die Brust mir schlagen,
Mich wider mich anklagen!
Oh Gott, hör, was ich lalle:
—Ich fiel in jede Falle,
Ich heuchelte Erbarmen
Nicht einen Tag lang lösen.
Ich heuchelte Erbarmen
Und übersah die Armen.
Ich zeigte Glut und Wärme,
Doch war das nur Geschwärme.
Mein Klima war der Winter,
Frost, Stroh und nichts dahinter.
Versprochen hiess gebrochen,
Im Ich lag ich verkrochen
Wie unter Federbetten.
Gleich allen Erz-Koketten
Missbraucht' ich noch die Reue,
Dass ich mich meiner freue.
So reim ich hier und leire,
Damit ich selbst mich feire,
Um wichtig mich zu machen
Vor Dir als Feig' und Schwachen.
Anschmeissen und Anbiedern,
Das ja, doch was erwidern,
Wenn Du zum Ernst Dich wendest,
Und einen Blick hersendest?
Was werd ich dann noch haben
Von allen guten Gaben,
Die ich bis auf die letzte
Beim Teufel längst versetzte?
Vielleicht blieb von dem Gute
Nur die und die Minute,
Wo ich mich Dir im Weinen
Ekstatisch durfte einen!
Wo ich, ein All der Wonnen,
Verdienstlos, war durchronnen
Vom Hymnus: "Heilig—Heilig."
Da war ich dein!—Dieweil ich
Noch wahnte, dass ich glaube,
Lag langst ich schon im Staube.
Ich habe im Besitze
Nur diese kurzen Blitze.
Sie sind die letzten Gulden,
Die meine Laster nicht stahlen.
So kann ich Dir nur zahlen
Die Schuld mit meinen Schulden.

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(I must beat my breast, make accusation against myself! Oh God, hear my babbling:—I fell into every trap, I could not free myself from evil for so much as a single day. I feigned pity and overlooked the poor. I showed warmth and ardor, but it was only affectation. My climate was winter, frost, snow, and nothing behind it. To promise meant to break my promise, I lay hidden in my ego as though under a feather quilt. Like all arch-coquettes, I even misused my remorse, taking delight in myself. Thus I rhyme here and sing so that I can celebrate myself, in order to make myself important in your eyes as a coward and a weakling. To cling and to intrude, yes, but what can I answer when you turn yourself to earnestness and send a glance at me? What will I have left then of all the good gifts which I pawned, to the last one, with the Devil long ago? Perhaps there remained a goodness only this or that moment when I was able to join myself ecstatically to you, weeping! When I, a universe of bliss, was pierced by the hymn: "Holy, Holy." Then was I yours!—While I still had the illusion that I believed, I already lay long in the dust. I have in my possession only these short gleams. They are the last coins that my vices have not stolen. So I can pay my debt to you only with my own debts.)

By metaphysical impulse Werfel was a Jew, but in his need for salvation he was in truth a Christian, one might indeed say almost a Russian Christian: for it was only through sin, only driven along by sin, that he could attain to completely purified expression.

The Writing on the Wall

LONELY CRUSADE. By CHESTER HIMES. New York, Knopf, 1947. 398 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by MILTON KLONSKY

THE terminal moraine of socially conscious novels, comic strips, movies, pulp fiction, etc. left behind by the Popular Front icecap of the 30's has, for better or for worse, permanently changed the American cultural landscape. Novels like *Lonely Crusade,* which deal with racial prejudice from the point of view of the insulted and injured themselves, are now common. What sets them apart from the muckraking books of the Upton Sinclair era is that they do not present any news to anyone (although they are equally sensational), and the isues involved, which were once considered so ugly and obscene that they had to be discussed in whispers like a dirty joke, are now frankly presented for mass entertainment as well as uplift. There is a financial profit in moral indignation.

Close students of the *grafitti* scratched on the walls of men's rooms during the war have observed how, amid the standard clutter of telephone numbers, sexual brags and invitations, heroic drawings of sexual organs, etc., there was a gradual influx of social consciousness. This took the form of lewd threats of violence against the —— Jews and, to a lesser extent as the threats were more fully carried out, against the Negroes. In barracks, in shipyards, in bars all over the United States, it was in these chambers of catharsis that the underground from time to time relieved itself of the social and political pieties of war propaganda and posted its own bulletins.

A CAMERA reflection of this phenomenon appeared in the official world of movies, radio, and publishing—but, of course, inverted to respectability: Don't kill the Jews (or the Negroes). Novels on racial and religious bigotry have now become a huge commercial success, even in competition with old-line historical sex fantasies. The two have much in common.

The styles and the sensibilities of these best sellers are cut out of the same sub-literary "popular" cheesecloth, with the only difference, perhaps, lying in the themes they exploit. But even this difference is practically annulled in the more pretentious works by a heavy dose of lurid sex, miscegenation, brutality, revenge, and third-act heroics.

The mucksters who rake the surface of these profound problems may be well-meaning, but their books and movies mean something else. Their honesty is not in question, nor is the legitimacy of the theme of racial intolerance for a work of art. Nevertheless, by cheap exploitation of an issue so crucial for the future of America, I think that the dignity of the cause and the dignity of the injured themselves must suffer. The wolf will not be domesticated and made comfortable. Although the professed purpose of these books is to prod the American public out of its apathy, they may well have the opposite effect of dulling it to sleep with the lullaby: everything will be all right if enough people

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buy and read this book. It is a truism, but one too often ignored, that the only preventive for racial and religious bigotry in America is to raise the living standards of the people, economically and culturally. And that means, among other things, the supercession of the Hollywood monopoly and big-business publishing. To paraphrase Jimmy Walker: no bigot was ever ruined by a book.

Lonely Crusade, the novel under review, is in a direct line of descent from its predecessors, more sensational, more insipid for all that and even more clumsily written. The plot concerns a young idealistic Negro, Lee Gordon, who gets a job as a union organizer on the West Coast during the war, has an affair with a white girl sent as a spy by the Communist party, then is betrayed by her because he is colored, just as she, subsequently (by some curious twist of the party's higher strategy), is betrayed by her comrades because she is white. Through this adventure he loses his wife, his job, and his friends, and becomes involved in the murder of a company agent; then, like Job, the hero regains all he has lost, and finally, in The Big Strike, he redeems himself altogether by leading a charge of pickets through the police.

Some notion of the shabby style may be had from the following: "She [Gordon's abandoned wife] did not want to commit suicide. She just did not want to live any more and did not know any way to do it otherwise." When Gordon considers going to bed with his mistress it is to "consummate their gender." A caricature of a Jewish Communist is seriously presented as a philosopher with dialectic like this: "Death will be but another change in the infinity of change. You will return from the reflection of matter to the matter you reflect. But the movement of which you have become a part in your resolution will go on." I can quote more, but this will suffice.

The four hundred pages of *Lonely Crusade* are sweated out with some steamy episodes of copulation between white women and black men, and, also, several vaporous discussions between Negroes and Jews (invariably presented as Communists) on such topics as Negro anti-Semitism and why Jews love money. The author's treatment here reveals a bias which is almost incredible in a book of its pretensions.

Which leads us to an overwhelming question—what real difference is there between the style of this book written by a Negro and the style of the very American mob culture which humiliates and degrades his people? *Lonely Crusade* breathes the same suffocating air as the ads, the radio, the movies, the pulps. Although the author is himself a Negro, his book is so deracinated, without any of the lively qualities of the imagination peculiar to his people, that it might easily have been composed by any clever college girl. Such writing, no matter how well intentioned, and the *grafitti* in the men's rooms are part of the same debased culture; there is, in fact, an almost symbiotic relationship between them, with each feeding off the other. Meanwhile, however, the handwriting on the wall of the men's room becomes clearer and larger.

The Dreyfus Affair

FROM DREYFUS TO PÉTAIN. By WILHELM HERZOG. New York, Creative Age Press, 1947. 313 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by N. A. PELCOVITS

IT IS just fifty years since Emile Zola was convicted by an intimidated French jury of "defaming" the court martial which had railroaded Captain Alfred Dreyfus to Devil's Island on a trumped-up charge of having sold military secrets to the enemy. For the good citizens of that jury the convincing evidence was not the documents about which lawyers argued in the courtroom but the frightening insinuations of the anti-Semitic press that Zola's acquittal and Dreyfus' exoneration would lead to the resignation of the military chiefs and the disintegration of the army. To the rest of the world, however, it was already clear (as the London *Times* remarked) that "M. Zola's offense is that he has dared to stand up for truth and civil liberty." French conscience, too, was soon aroused, the Dreyfusard campaign gained momentum, and Dreyfus was rehabilitated by an officially repentant republic. The most famous of modern *causes célèbres* was over. But was it? A generation later political passions could still be aroused by the presentation of a pro-Dreyfus play in Paris; and even today it would be rash to suggest that the ghosts of Drumont and Rochefort and Déroulède have been finally laid.

The Dreyfus affair is thus far from "over" and the most remarkable thing about this remarkable case is that half a century later it still

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seeks a historian. Reinach's seven-volume *Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus,* completed some forty years ago, is more of a documented brief than a history. Aside from scattered pages in the better histories of the Third Republic (such as that of D. W. Brogan), our knowledge is still derived to an overwhelming extent from contemporary pamphleteers, diarists, polemicists, and apologists. Even the lively and popular account by Jacques Kayser is marred by the diffuseness and the strained air of vindication and bathos which seems to seize literary Dreyfusards.

It is therefore with regret that I report another miss. Although he has made a noteworthy contribution to a general understanding of the affair and has illumined some of its dark corners with scholarly insight, Mr. Herzog has largely failed in his stated effort to give us "a scientific representation of the entire complexity of the Affair." *Dreyfus to Pétain* can by no means be dismissed. It represents four years of research and writing and exhibits a wide acquaintance with the social and political context from which the case emerged; documentary material, particularly that from German sources, is well handled; and some of the interpretations reflect shrewd understanding of character and motives. Notable are the portrayals of Dreyfus and Esterhazy and the account of Zola's awakening to the moral significance of the affair. Nor is Mr. Herzog unaware of the part played by political anti-Semitism in the clerical-military plot to capture the government and soul of France through the anti-Dreyfus propaganda and of the continuing influence of this conspiracy of reaction in French politics. The road from Drumont to Laval is well defined.

Yet all the virtues of this book are not enough to overcome its faults, most of which can be traced to an essential lack of cohesiveness. *Dreyfus to Pétain* is confusing and disjointed. Its central theme—the revival of an anti-republican, anti-Semitic movement in France as an integral part of the Dreyfus case—is often stated but never developed; instead the author worries it to shreds. Trying hard to present all the facets of a complex story, Mr. Herzog spreads himself thin and gives the impression—his account is that splotchy and out of proportion—of an amateur hand painting too difficult a theme on too large a canvas. Observing events through the eyes of the principals is, of course, a perfectly valid method in writing history, but with few exceptions the profiles do not come off and are further marred by an awkward style and stray teutonisms.

There are many reasons why the Dreyfus case has been neglected by historians and why those who do try to deal with it so often stumble. The affair remains complex and many of its material facts are still shrouded in mystery. Some of the principal conspirators—Colonel Henry for example—died without leaving a record of their part in the affair. There was a concerted effort to shield the villainies of Esterhazy, the real betrayer of France, for whose crimes Dreyfus was made the scapegoat. Dreyfus himself is the supreme example of the hero *malgré lui* and neither he nor his relatives were concerned with the broader issues once his amnesty had been gained. Even more important is the lack of basic materials: the dossier in the case remains sealed (if it still exists) and the ministry of war has not welcomed the researches of historians. But the major obstacle is of a different order.

All attempts to reconstruct the affair have centered on the Dreyfus "case" and have been concerned with the task of bolstering the innocence of Dreyfus and establishing the villainy of Sandherr and Henry and Esterhazy and Boisdeffre, a matter of small significance. The Dreyfus affair was never simply the story of the ordeal of one man. Nor, in a larger sense, did the correction of injustice close the case. From the very first, when the honest Colonel Picquart noted discrepancies in the dossier and it became clear that a judicial error was being deliberately perpetuated, all France divided not upon a question of individual justice but on that of the survival of the republic. From that time on Dreyfus himself was the most irrelevant of factors. For the Dreyfusards it was clear that they were defending the principles of 1789 against the attacks of the clericals and anti-Semites and professional "patriots." What made the Dreyfus case historically important was that the military chiefs, because of their implication in the conspiracy to shield one of their own by making a scapegoat of the Jewish officer, were forced to line up with the Drumonts and Déroulèdes in order to protect themselves. Having become captives of the clericals and anti-Semites, the generals had no choice but to become the champions of reaction. On this issue there were no intermediates and on this issue France has fought a suppressed civil war to this day. And it is only in this context that the authentic history of the Dreyfus affair will some day be written.

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The Message of Leo Baeck

THE PHARISEES, AND OTHER ESSAYS. By LEO BAECK. New York, Schocken Books, 1947. 164 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by R. TRAVERS HERFORD

The contents of this book are not new, although here collected together for the first time. The essay on the Pharisees was written in 1927 and published as a booklet in 1934. The others, according to the preface, appeared in a volume of essays in 1938, which was destroyed by the Gestapo. The contents of the several essays, valuable as they are, cannot therefore be taken (as the reader would naturally take them) as being the personal message of Dr. Baeck to those now living in the distracted world of today. The words were written years ago, before the terrible persecution of the Jews had risen to its height, and before Dr. Baeck had been caught in its clutches, and suffered, as recorded on the dust cover of the book.

Nevertheless, the book has a message for the present time, and the publishers have judged well that a collection of Dr. Baeck's essays would be very helpful and encouraging in the troubles which lie heavy on Jews in these days.

For these seven essays, each in its way, express the undying hope of Israel, the unshakeable faith in its future, the sure trust that it will survive all shocks of calamity, and will in the end complete its task as God's witness to the world, by his continual guidance and help. That has been the significance of Judaism throughout its long history; and this book, appearing as it now does after the most terrible suffering that even Jewry has known, is a reassertion of the undying faith of Israel, flung out in the face of the world. That is what this book really means, as the present reviewer understands it, and Dr. Baeck and the publishers may divide between them the honor of a notable service done for the cause which is dear to them.

THE first essay, of which the subject provides the title of the book as a whole, is considerably longer than any of the others. It extends to fifty pages, while the others vary round about sixteen pages each. Their subjects are as follows: "Tradition in Judaism," "Judaism in the Church," "Origin of Jewish Mysticism," "Greek and Jewish Preaching," "Two World Views Compared," "The Character of Judaism." The reader cannot fail to be impressed by the extent of Dr. Baeck's reading in widely separated fields of study. Naturally, he is at home in the Rabbinical literature; but he refers often to Plato. He knows the New Testament, also Marcion and Tertullian. He makes a critical distinction between Luther and Calvin, decidedly in favor of Calvin; and the present reviewer was surprised and gratified, to meet with a reference to the Unitarianism of Priestley, Parker, Channing, Longfellow, and Martineau, by one to whom these writers were evidently well known. Such evidence of a mind richly stored and variously trained makes it possible to understand how it was that, during the years when he was in the concentration camp at Theresienstadt, he could and did fulfill the office of leader, counsellor, teacher, and friend to his fellow-prisoners. Without help from books, for none could be had, he organized classes for study in philosophy, theology, history and, in general, promoted the religious and intellectual life of his fellows in captivity. He did this for six years, and came out at last with spirit unbroken and head unbowed.

The long essay on the Pharisees is an attempt to solve the problem, so often attempted but in Dr. Baeck's opinion unsuccessfully, viz: the real meaning of the name "Pharisee" and its consequent explanation of the significance of those who bore the name as a force in religious history. Dr. Baeck's argument is elaborate and not too easy to follow, but it lays itself open to question and criticism to an extent that prevents its acceptance as a final solution of the problem with which it deals.

It all goes to strengthen the opinion, which the present reviewer has long held, that the real reason why the Pharisees were so called cannot now be recovered with any certainty, and is now of little or no importance. What the Pharisees did, and why they did it, and thus their importance in the history of Judaism—all this is well known and clearly established; but it does not need for its support an explanation of the name attached to, or borne by, those who played that part in Jewish history. The name may have been a mere nickname, or may refer to some trivial feature in their practice; what really matters, is to bring out clearly the fact that the Pharisees were the men who saved Judaism from becoming a barren formation, kept it a living religion and sent it on its way down the ages, always full of life and hope and faith. All this Dr. Baeck knows well, and it

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is all implied in his essay, once the argument has left behind the attempt to account for the name Pharisee. There could be no finer illustration of what the Pharisees really did than Dr. Baeck himself.

SHORT though the other essays are by comparison with the first, they contain abundant matter for thought, and ample proof of the writer's learning and his intellectual power.

The essay on "Tradition in Judaism" deals with a subject that is of primary importance in the development of Jewish religion. The writer is concerned not so much with the tradition in its historical sequence, as rather with tradition as a form of thought, a guide to life. The part which Dr. Baeck assigns to tradition in the development of the life of Israel leads him to make statements which are sometimes rather bewildering, at all events to a non-Jewish reader, and at other times makes him wonder whether the real course of development was not more simple than it is here represented.

The essay on "Judaism in the Church" is one which could be written only by a man of great learning, dispassionate judgment, and sympathetic understanding. There is nothing polemical in it, nothing to wound the most convinced opponent. It would do good to readers in all sections of the Christian church if they would study carefully Dr. Baeck's demonstration of the direction of certain tendencies in Christian history.

Of the essay on the "Origin of Jewish Mysticism," the present reviewer can hardly say anything with confidence, as he feels strongly his own ignorance of the subject. The essay on "Greek and Jewish Preaching" develops what may seem to be a paradox, and may really be a paradox. Is it possible to compare effectively the Greek and the Jewish method of appeal by men to their fellow men in the region of religion? Considering how different the two religions were, such a possibility seems doubtful. And to the present reviewer, the doubt is still there after reading the essay with all its learning. The essay on "Two World Views Compared" and the final one on "The Character of Judaism," must here be left to make their own way to the mind and heart of the reader. The depth of their thought is perhaps only equalled by the difficulty of its expression, and the present reviewer humbly confesses his inability to do justice to them.

Looking back over the book as a whole, one is most of all impressed by the very great power of the author, alike as an exponent of his own or others' thoughts, as a master of vast learning, and most of all as a spiritual force. His words and his example should bring hope to stricken hearts among his people, and nerve them to renew the fight in which Israel has been so often smitten down, but never in all the ages finally conquered.

With deep appreciation of its worth and warm regard for its author, I commend this book to the attention of everyone, Jew or Christian, whom it may reach.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

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R. TRAVERS HERFORD is the distinguished British scholar and writer, and the renowned authority on the Pharisees.

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